

Brutalism: An Architecture of Exhilaration

My talk hopes to situate the UMass Dartmouth campus in its initial architectural and historical context by looking more broadly at the architectural style of brutalism in the US. It hopes to get at what this style of architecture meant and why it became so popular among architects, architecture critics, and clients at the time when this campus and so many other brutalist buildings were constructed

The term brutalism sounds funny if not outright sinister when you first encounter it as it seems to derive from the adjective brutal. The primary explanation for this strange name is that it derived from a French expression - *beton brut* - meaning rough or raw concrete – the material characteristic that is so typical of this style of architecture. In the US the architects who built in the brutalist style steered clear of this term - no doubt because it would have been off-putting to clients and also, I think, because it didn't express their intentions which were not, as I will be arguing here, to create a brutalizing architecture.

Brutalism like we have here at UMass Dartmouth is a powerful and demanding architecture. Its large scale, weighty concrete forms make strong, forceful impression. Its complex, top-heavy compositions of piers, jutting projections and shadowy recessions gives it an active straining look. This is not an easy architecture. It demands physical and perceptual exertion. Its many stairs and recessed entryways make you work to move around and find your way inside. Once inside its highly textured walls and twisting corridors leading into dramatic multileveled atriums with daredevil cantilevered balconies can be experienced as overwhelming and disorienting. Altogether this makes for an architecture that calls attention to itself. In the past and still today brutalist buildings like these have confused and even aggravated many people

This style of architecture has come in for a lot of criticism since the 1970s. It has been viewed as part of a broader failure on the part of modernist architecture to appeal to people or answer their needs. It has been interpreted as a sort of bomb shelter architecture – reflecting Cold War tensions and fears of the time about the threat of atomic war and the need for strong shelter. Since most brutalist buildings were built in 1960s – it has been seen as an architecture that was built to withstand the social unrest and, especially in campus settings like this, the student protests and of that era.

These are later interpretations of brutalism. But in order to get at brutalist buildings original significance and appeal – and they must have had an appeal since so many of them were built - I want to look at the architectural and social concerns brutalism emerged out of and sought to address. In the process I will look carefully at the characteristic formal features of brutalism and make the case that brutalism's peculiar

forms, spaces, and textures are set out to encourage a sense of exhilaration and uplift in their users.

The Triumph of Architectural Modernism after WWII

I see brutalism as having emerged out of two crises in the 1950s – one architectural and the other human.

After WWII, International Style modern architecture triumphed over historicist styles to become the most widely employed building style in the US.

Here are 2 famous examples of this style in this country from the early 1950s - Lever House – an office tower in NYC by the firm SOM and the Lake Shore Drive Apartment houses in Chicago by Mies van der Rohe.

For proponents, International Style modernism appeared to more truly represent the modern era than previously favored architectural styles like the neoclassical or the neogothic. It featured clean lines and a bold expression of structure. Its modular glass and steel wall construction could be mass produced and erected with relative ease. Its greater height opened up possibilities for more space at ground level for plazas, parks and recreation spaces. Inside its few interior supports and extensive walls of glass allowed for open, flexible, sunlit interiors

Two American campuses made extensive use of International Style modernism. IIT with its arrangement of free standing, horizontally oriented International Style buildings and the Air Force Academy – which built a dramatic new campus for itself in Colorado, set up on a platform with the Rocky Mountains serving as backdrop. Smooth, machine finished surfaces, repetitive modular organization, crisp detailing and the structural drama of features like this floating staircase bespoke the ideals of technical advance, precision, and discipline valued and promoted at these institutions

Modern Architecture in Crisis

International Style modernism seemed to its early proponents to be an excitingly new and appropriate expression of the modern era. However, in the 1950s, its rectilinear, unornamented, glass and steel aesthetic quickly became routine and began to be perceived as problematic. By the end of the fifties it was widely acknowledged in American architectural circles that much recent construction alienated the general public and even many architects.

Two documents drawn from American architectural magazines in 1959 give a sense for this. An article titled “The Monotonous Curtain Wall” which laments the ubiquitous curtain wall as too often boring, unappealing, and lacking in color, detail, and texture and a drawing of a housing complex with the caption - Is this our Paradise? This image opens out to the widespread critiques of this architecture then being advanced by Rudolph and many other commentators - that these buildings consisted solely of rectangular boxes with regularly spaced bays - their roofs were always flat, their floor and ceiling heights

were uniform, and lighting hardly varied - ornament and symbolism were rare. Conceived of as free-standing structures, International Style structures did not relate to existing buildings or shape attractive public spaces around them. Thus they were deplored as impoverished, uncreative, cold, simple buildings that did not offer or require much of their users.

Many calls went out for a more “human” modern architecture. Rudolph complained “...we need much more humanization in our work!” While an editorial in the magazine, *Architectural Forum*, exclaimed: “Now we cry for human architecture.... It is clear to all thoughtful men that architecture to be great must go beyond the limited - though basic - virtues of efficiency and common-sense economy. On all sides we hear the demand that our architecture be more human.”

Modern Americans in Crisis

At the same time Modern architecture was coming under fire for being inadequate and even inhuman, postwar Americans were likewise being criticized and seen to be in crisis.

The writings of American intellectuals during the fifties voiced increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of life and the behavior of Americans. It was observed that work for the majority of Americans consisted of jobs where workers performed a specialized function that required little intellect or creativity. This was bad enough. Even worse, outside of work where, with ever more time and money on their hands, they had the means to develop their higher capacities, middle class American life was largely taken up with mindless consumption and entertainment. Best-selling books like William Whyte’s *The Organization Man* of 1956 argued that conformity was a rapidly growing sociological trend. Whyte worried that in this new age of the “organization man,” or corporate employee, Americans were becoming over-dependent on the opinion and direction of their peer groups out in the suburbs, the bureaucratic organizations they worked for, and the manipulative mass media. Numerous intellectuals and journalists agreed and claimed that Americans were failing to exercise their full critical, emotional, and perceptual potential. This was the reason, they argued, for the vague but persistent feelings of anxiety and discontent they claimed had become so strangely widespread in this affluent society.

Contemporary Americans, it was lamented, were not living up to their humanist potential. Humanism, an ethos centered on the special dignity and abilities of human beings, emerged in Europe in the Renaissance and it has existed in various permutations since. In the postwar decades of the US, humanism became an influential ideology which promoted a model of human beings as cultured, well-rounded individuals who strive to improve their world and themselves and who ideally exercise the full range of their capacities – physical, intellectual, emotional, perceptual and spiritual. Architects and architectural critics echoed these humanist concerns and ideals in their own writings.

Belief Architecture Influences People

Rudolph's ultimate aim with architecture, as stated in 1955, incorporates both troubled and valorizing humanist understandings of man. He stated: "An architect's function is to help man forget his troubles, and enrich his spirit. We must not lose sight of our task." Here and elsewhere Rudolph expressed belief in the ability of architecture to effect people's lives and outlook. This was a widely held and frequently voiced belief in postwar architectural circles.

And work and domestic environments like these, which were sprouting up across the country at this time, were not seen to be helping. The boxy glass skyscraper which came increasingly to be viewed as a symbol of corporate culture conformity and depersonalization and the suburb – with its row upon row of very similar if not identical houses and streets

A striking aspect of the critiques of contemporary architecture and citizens in postwar American culture is that modern architecture and Americans frequently mirror one another, exhibiting the same faults. Standardization, enervation, and crass materialism were perceived to characterize both the built environment and its inhabitants. Architectural writers and cultural critics suggested that the deficits in each were reinforcing one another. Worrisome as this parallel was, the encouraging corollary to it was the implication that if you altered and improved architecture you could alter and improve its users. Thus in American architectural discourse a more "human" modern architecture very often meant one endowed with qualities then desired in people such as individualism, creativity, aspiration, delight, and vigor. The problem was how to come up with this more "human" modern architecture?

Architecture as Art Could Help

Approaching architecture as art became a common prescription for making modern architecture more human. During the course of the fifties many architects and critics came to the conclusion that modern architecture's very problem was that it was not artistic enough.

American architecture culture's renewed alliance with art was part of a broader national trend. In light of the new economic and political might of the United States at this historical moment, art assumed greater significance to the repute and security of the nation. Influential figures like President John F. Kennedy, media magnate Henry Luce, and many university presidents and educators argued that the form and features of America's art and built environment were revealing of its character and worth. A cultural renaissance would prove the greatness of America's civilization and persuade others of the rightness of democracy and capitalism.

It was also then argued that art contributes to the shaping of humanist individuals. In particular the aesthetic experience of art was widely accepted as beneficial to people at this moment and was championed with great vigor in American schools and universities in the decades after WWII. Postwar philosophers, educators, psychologists, and artists argued that aesthetic experience is a basic psychological aptitude and need in human

beings. They characterized aesthetic experience as an intense, prolonged interaction on the part of a beholder with an artwork, other object, or event in which the beholder pays close attention to the formal features of the work and their expressive aspects.

The effects of such an experience, it was claimed, were extremely positive. In having an aesthetic experience, the beholder actively interacts with the world, becomes engaged and creative, and casts off habit and distraction. Exercising perceptual, imaginative and emotional faculties that were too often left to atrophy in the modern world, aesthetic experience was seen to induce valuable, pleasurable growth in beholders and expand their understanding of themselves, others, and their world. As a result the beholder experiences a feeling of wholeness and heightened vitality.

Aesthetic experience came to be viewed as a critical means of counteracting current “organization man” concerns. Such assertions were supported by contemporary human science research. Psychological and sociological studies of the time concluded that art experience enlivens individuals and guards against conformity. Aesthetic experience thus became part of the prescribed diet for the formation of well-rounded, humanist individuals.

To imagine that architecture could produce the powerful and glorious effect being ascribed to aesthetic experience represented a highly gratifying prospect for architects and critics. Buildings would not only become pleasurable experiences but could also serve as humanist training grounds for their users. Building art architecture that provided users with much opportunity for aesthetic experience appeared to show a way for contemporary architecture to have a major and very positive social impact. Again though the question for architects was - how to do this? What would such an experiential modern architecture look like?

Brutalism as a Promising Direction

In American architectural circles in the late 1950s and early 60s there was a great deal of formal experimentation. Architects and critics also began to look with new interest at monumental architecture from the past which, as they were all too painfully aware, was more appealing than modernist architecture to laypeople and oftentimes even to modern architects themselves. As Rudolph noted architects and laypeople flocked to cities like Paris, Rome and Venice in order to wander about and experience this older architecture.

At this time brutalism emerged as a promising new stylistic direction for Modern architecture. The Swiss architect, Le Corbusier's, postwar buildings provided the major initial impetus for American architects and critics' interest in and turn to this heavier, more monumental aesthetic.

Unité apartment block in Marseilles
Government buildings at Chandigarh

For these structures Le Corbusier used poured in place, reinforced concrete. Contrary to usual practice the concrete was left exposed inside and out so that one could see the imprints of the wooden formwork into which it had been poured. Here we have the French *beton brut* - or rough concrete surfaces - that led to the term brutalism.

For architects Le Corbusier's sculptural, textured use of concrete turned it into a building material with great artistic potential. A new route for architectural expression and monumentality appeared, wonderfully, to open up and architects around the world, including Rudolph, were fascinated. In 1960 Rudolph visited Chandigarh and returned deeply affected. In a text from that year he wrote: "As time goes on I am sure that every man will understand the importance of Chandigarh; people will go there as they now go to the Piazza San Marco in Venice." Many of Rudolph's subsequent designs experimented with this architectural aesthetic.

The Yale Art & Architecture Building: Architecture as Aesthetic Experience

One of the earliest and most influential of these was his Yale Art and Architecture Building which opened in 1963. The Yale Art and Architecture Building - or the A&A Building for short - was a milestone in the development and acceptance of brutalism in the US. With it Rudolph appeared to believe he had found that more "human" modern architecture he and so many others had been looking for and he continued to employ the brutalist aesthetic he developed here in his subsequent work of the 1960s, including of course his work on this campus.

The American architectural press gave the A&A Building a lavish and celebratory reception. It made the covers of all 3 of the leading architectural magazines in the same month and was illustrated and discussed in extensive feature articles. It was also written up in numerous other magazines including the NYT and Time Magazine. Monumental, sculptural and constructed of roughly textured concrete inside and out, Rudolph had clearly been influenced by the work of Le Corbusier but he had also developed his own version of brutalism and it raised great hopes for the future of architecture in this country. Many American architects and clients subsequently followed Rudolph's stylistic lead and designed or commissioned brutalist buildings of their own

Because of its importance and also because a great deal of photographs of it in its original state exist, the A&A Building provides a revealing site to examine Rudolph's brutalist aesthetic as an environment designed to foster humanist ideals and behavior in users.

Brutalism allowed Rudolph to tackle a number of then vexing architectural quandaries. He and many other architects and critics had long criticized the International Style as monotonous, unexpressive and incompatible with older architecture. The A&A Building's thick, rough, hammered by hand walls, and irregular silhouette represented a deliberate break from the International Style's smooth, spare, and modular aesthetic. In Rudolph's view brutalism also enabled him to reinvest modernism with the material heft, broken down masses, patterns of light and shadow, elaborate silhouettes and interior complexity he admired so much in older architecture and believed formed the basis for its

widespread appeal. He stressed the way this design carefully related to the varied heights and massing of the buildings around it and the way it echoes the towered irregular silhouettes of Yale's older historicist buildings.

Furthermore brutalism appeared to open up more expressive possibilities for modern architecture. Regretting that too often contemporary "buildings have very little to say," Rudolph had long submitted that architecture should entail meaning and express human aspiration and the time in which it was built. The A&A Building can be seen to do this in several ways. Exhibiting much design effort and expenditure, it materially announces Rudolph and Yale's postwar aesthetic ambitions. The A&A Building housed Yale's School of Art and Architecture, whose programs at that moment were attempting to foster the creation and appreciation of the visual arts in the US. The A&A Building's monumental exterior elevations and grand interiors proclaim a determination to contribute to the artistic merit and grandeur of Yale's campus, the city of New Haven, and the nation. Rudolph placed several sculptures alongside its primary street facades and displayed many artworks and decorative pieces throughout its interiors thus promoting the humanist ideal of integrating art into everyday life. Features like the A&A Building's roof terraces and generous glass walls (especially when lit up at night) give passersby views of the many creative human endeavors taking place within. This brutalist art center thus bespeaks a society which could afford and which valued high culture.

Additionally the A&A Building's unique towered exterior and spatially irregular interiors lend themselves to interpretations of this building as individualistic and as straining against architectural and social conformity. Walter MacQuade, an architectural critic, characterized the A&A Building as: "an emphatic symbol of the individual and the learned arts." Ada Louise Huxtable writing for the NYT described the A&A Building with a string of superlatives including "willful, bold, brilliant, beautiful and very possibly great." These adjectives could also describe postwar humanist ideals for people and there was a sense in critical reviews that the A&A Building not only expressed but could transmit such desirable qualities to those who took the time to appreciate this building. *Progressive Architecture's* composite cover in which Rudolph, the independent visionary, is collaged unto an exterior tower of the A&A Building, which surges dynamically up into the blue sky, conveys this point visually.

Entrance

Stimulating a variety of senses and responses (including fear of falling!), Rudolph endeavored to trigger in users the state of heightened perceptual awareness then being associated with the postwar ideal of aesthetic experience. And this continues throughout the A&A Building which offers users a variety of highly dramatic spatial and formal experiences.

Exhibition room

The exhibition room, which is the first room you encounter off the main entrance, is one of these. Intended for the display and presentation of student projects and artworks, the exhibition room was one of the grand rooms of the A&A Building but it is also representative of the ambitious interiors Rudolph typically devised with brutalism. The

exhibition room's spatially active design entails activity on the part of users. Moving across it one is continually ascending and descending low broad stairs. All the while the ceiling either soars up above or descends down upon you. In this way one is made highly aware of being elevated or depressed and of the constricting and releasing effect of different spatial dimensions. With very few windows, lighting is dim, encouraging users to slow down, look more intently, and approach displays closely.

As can be read in their excited commentaries, critics were thrilled with the A&A Building. This brutalist design induced in them the uplifting invigoration of the aesthetic encounter and they presumed all users would feel similarly. A picture of a person or people in the exhibition room intensely looking appeared with great regularity in the magazines. Here magazine editors and photographers could most literally communicate their interpretation of the A&A Building as a place of aesthetic experience.

roof terrace

A photograph of people having an intense aesthetic experience also appeared frequently in pictures of the A&A Building's roof terraces. These terraces give bracing views over Yale, the city of New Haven, and the Atlantic Ocean. With their small potted trees and concrete planters serving as guard railings, these terraces turned into a leafy roof garden in warm weather. Up here, one has the adventuresome, heroic feeling of having reached the top of a great summit.

Auditorium

In contrast to the roof terrace, in the A&A Building's lower portions like its main auditorium, lighting was dim and the space tightly enclosed.

Danger

With the auditorium and features like this balcony, Rudolph introduced a component of danger into users' consciousness. Moving around the A&A Building, one frequently finds oneself on a walkway, balcony or staircase in close proximity to a drop that raises the frightening possibility of a fall. Also the jagged texture of its walls threatens injury if one brushes too hard against it. Confrontations with these suggestions of peril work to thrill and impel alertness.

Visual stimulation

Another way for Rudolph to activate users and engage their attention was to provide them with a veritable visual feast of unusual vistas, bright orange carpeting, artworks, plants, rough-hewn curtains, and dynamic variously textured concrete forms. He said about the A&A Building: "The vistas throughout the building are very important and everywhere, everywhere, everywhere there should be something to see."

Architectural drafting room

In *Feeling and Form*, her influential 1953 philosophy of art, Suzanne Langer contends there is a specific "aesthetic emotion" inspired by the perception of all "good" art: a pervasive feeling of exhilaration. Perhaps the most spectacular of the A&A Building's

interiors, Rudolph clearly aimed for such a response with the 2 story high architectural drafting room.

Spatial confusion

With its multileveled rooms, oddball vistas, array of plastic and decorative incidents, and labyrinthine layout, the A&A Building is an initially confusing and overwhelming building. It takes a number of times walking through it to comprehend its general organization and be able to find one's way around with any sort of efficiency. It was and is frequently experienced as disorienting. But in this the A&A Building represented a critical reaction against the simple plans, flexible openness and uniform floor and ceiling heights of the International Style. Brutalism set forth a modernist spatial alternative whose fixed spatial sequences imply states of anticipation, challenge, tension and culmination. Unable to rely on habit, users are expected to struggle. They must make a concerted effort and eventually can expect to attain mastery over the logic and peculiarities of this layout. Rudolph supposed this process would be experienced as rewarding.

Postwar human science research provided much support for Rudolph's assumption about the pleasure of spatial and formal complexity and abundant sensory stimulation. Psychologists were then contending that aesthetic stimulation was an important human need, providing a means for individuals to exercise their perceptual and cognitive capacities and thus maintain an healthy, fulfilling state of growth. Many studies on the effects of sensory deprivation (spurred on initially by the Korean War) were undertaken in the fifties and sixties. Such studies started from the premise that stimulation is good, indeed, essential for the development and maintenance of normal behavior. Stimulation was repeatedly shown to play a major role in the perceptual and cognitive function and motivational processes of human beings. The behavioral psychologist, Daniel Berlyne's 1960 book, *Conflict Arousal and Curiosity*, argues that aesthetic features such as novelty, surprise, uncertainty, conflict and complexity, prompt inquisitiveness and investigative responses in the observer and he relates this to what he claims is the socio-biological need of all creatures to exercise their ability to remain alert and perceptive to their environment, a state which increases their chances of survival. Rudolph liberally incorporated such features into the A&A Building and his subsequent brutalist designs.

Rudolph's monumental and complex brutalist aesthetic can thus be seen as an attempt to make users more "human" or humanist in postwar intellectuals' sense of the word. Probably for this reason, Rudolph remarked about the A&A Building: "I think of it as being very human. I'm afraid that I would rather see most buildings without people in them, but really this is one building which seems to me to look better with people;" Users presence was necessary for the enlivening, ennobling experiential process he aimed to induce with the A&A Building. In it users are asked to maximize their capacities, and overcome challenges. In it problems perceived in the postwar decades to be dogging modern life - monotony, conformity, passivity, and atrophying faculties - could be quelled by means of an architecture that roused and impelled users. In it users enlarged their sense of their own potential. In this way not only architecture but also users were exalted and made more monumental.

Brutalism Becomes Widespread

Brutalism became a widespread architectural style in the United States in the years after the A&A Building opened. From the mid sixties through the early seventies, it was employed most frequently for university buildings, schools, museums, performing art centers, and religious and ambitious government structures. Business and residential examples exist as well. During this time, the brutalist designs of Rudolph and many other architects and firms repeatedly received generous and favorable coverage in the press. Many were the recipients of prestigious design awards.

The brutalist buildings of these architects or firms certainly differ from one another in various ways. However, brutalist work shares a desire to stress architecture's bulk, raw materiality, and potential for formal drama. Usually constructed of concrete, sometimes of brick, these structures recall stone architecture of the distant past while simultaneously seeming futuristic. (Not surprisingly brutalist architecture has provided science fiction settings for quite a number of films.) Brutalist buildings exhibit an attempt to be unique through unusual configurations. They seek to impress, to give users pause, to give them a sense of adventure and discovery, and to heighten their experience of form, space, material, light and texture.

A survey of the major American architectural journals in the decade following the opening of the A&A Building, reveals that American architects and critics shied away from the term brutalism. However, this survey does turn up plenty of evidence that among architects, critics and clients that humanist values and interpretations underpinned and validated this architectural style. Brutalist buildings were admired as structures that contributed to the making of a more artistic and engaging built environment. They were appreciated as setting the stage for a mode of heightened awareness and vitality in users. Repeatedly described by critics as distinctive, vigorous, weighty, bold, complex, and innovative they embodied and, it was assumed, communicated these behavioral ideals to those who came into contact with them.

Brutalism was seen as especially suitable for monumentality and thus for civic and cultural buildings. Accompanying the desire for monumentality was the behavioral assumption that this quality acted like a magnet to draw people to spend leisure time in and around a building. Numerous brutalist projects were erected to help to rejuvenate declining city centers. One of these was the Everson Museum of Art which was part of a new civic and cultural complex for downtown Syracuse. Set up on a podium, the museum's exterior is a windowless sculptural object of massive cantilevered volumes and its interior featured a high central hall opening onto different levels of balconies, galleries and suspended walkways. The client, the architect, I.M Pei, and critics saw this as a work of architectural art that would help to revitalize downtown. Citizens of Akron, OH too aggrandized their city with a brutalist structure, the Edwin J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall (1973). Akron's major banks, newspapers, corporations and wealthy individuals funded the construction of this auditorium and performance space. A circuitous arrangement of stairways, terraces, stepped gardens and a fountain lead up to the highly

sculptural hall in which variously angled, solid concrete walls frame central stretches of glass.

Through walkways, plazas, terraces, and useable rooftops, which were frequently characteristic of brutalist buildings and were often paved in the same concrete or brick material as the buildings themselves, architects believed they were shaping engaging environments that would revive public life. Almost the entire roof of the blocky concrete Oakland Museum by Roche and Dinckelsoo is given over to a stepped composition of paved and planted terraces. Furnished with lush planting, seating, and ponds, the museum's roof thus provides a downtown park that is publicly accessible by a series of ramps leading up from the surrounding sidewalks. The Financial Plaza of the Pacific (1969) in Hawaii is yet another example of the way architects used brutalism to attempt to revive the public realm. This development consists of three muscular concrete buildings of various heights grouped together on a paved plaza covering an entire city block in downtown Honolulu. An elevated concrete promenade connects the three buildings on the second floor level and creates a series of shaded passageways and seating areas at the street level of this city block.

By the sixties many important clients had been persuaded of the importance of erecting an artistic built environment. At a moment when the United States was enjoying great prosperity and political influence, brutalism's large-scale monumentality answered the desires of political authorities to give architectural expression to their Great Society ambitions. Boston's City Hall, the crowning centerpiece of the clearing and urban renewal of the city's old wharf and red light district, is a famous and local example. Boston City Hall is a monumental composition of concrete and red brick masses on its exterior and impressive, coffered ceiling spaces on its interior. An immense brick plaza leads directly into the third story of the structure. Inside a collection of grand concourses, stairs, escalators and ramps allow large numbers of people to move through the building and allow one to exit either at the base or top of the hill on which the building sits. The architects hoped this design would tempt pedestrians to pass through Boston City Hall as they moved about the city thus turning this monumental architectural environment into a daily aesthetic and civic experience for the public. In this way Brutalism answered the desire of architects and government officials to produce what they hoped would be a stirring architecture for democracy.

Golden Age of Higher Education

However, universities were by far the most important client base for brutalism. The postwar decades have been called the golden age of higher education in the United States. In decades marked by Cold War concerns and a rapidly growing national economy, increased value was laid on university research and an educated workforce. Enrollments soared and federal, state and corporate funding flowed generously. Existing institutions greatly expanded and many entirely new universities, colleges and community colleges were founded and constructed. Brutalism became a prominent architectural feature on many many American campuses across the country.

Brutalism's appeal to academic administrators was the result of a number of factors. Leading architects and critics were then championing it. For universities hoping to attract press coverage through their architecture, brutalism represented a good bet. Yale and Harvard early on erected brutalist buildings thus legitimizing this style, linking it with education and with the prestige of preeminent institutions. Received as architectural art, brutalist buildings were associated with creativity, individualism, and high intellectual and cultural achievement. Likewise they were appreciated as challenging, enlivening environments able to invigorate the social and intellectual climate of the academic community. As architectural artworks they contributed to the aesthetic aspirations of the nation, aspirations that universities were then championing and seeking to spearhead. And finally brutalism's weighty, sculptural and complex forms appeared boldly new while simultaneously communicating the strength, permanence and importance of past architectural monuments. It was thus understood as modern *and* as echoing older architectural traditions. Therefore brutalism was perceived to complement the architecture of longstanding campuses like Yale and to endow new campuses like UMass Dartmouth with historical resonance and a sense of established grandeur.

As colleges and universities expanded and laid claim to a greater role in American society, they wanted to reflect this architecturally. Brutalism's animate yet substantial monumentality embodied the ambitions and optimism of academia in this golden age of higher education.