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Emily Lombard skiing in front of her house at 441 Glen Road in January 1957. Architect Hugh Stubbins designed the house in 1950 for her parents, George and Mary Esther Lombard. (Courtesy Emily Lombard Hutcheson)

Modernism in Weston, 1930-1970 Part II

This is the second of a two-part issue on modernism in Weston. Copies of Part I, in the Fall 2009 issue of the *WHS Bulletin*, may be obtained at a cost of \$5.00 from the Weston Historical Society, P.O. Box 343, Weston, MA 02493. We welcome information about other modern houses in Weston. Send us your stories!

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Mary Esther Lombard with son Josh (age 12) and daughter Emily (age 3) in February 1952, the first winter they lived in the Glen Road house. They are eating breakfast outdoors, which Mr. and Mrs. Lombard always did, rain or shine, year-round. (Courtesy Emily Lombard Hutchinson)





The Lombard family, December, 1957, in front of the fireplace at their Glen Road home, designed by Hugh Stubbins. Note the odd sail-like chimney. There was no mantel from which to hang Christmas stockings, so George Lombard would rig up a wire. (Left to right) Esther, Posy, George, Annabel (baby), Mary Esther, Mike, Rachel, Josh, Emily. (Photo by Robert Ogilvie, courtesy Emily Lombard Hutchinson)

Growing Up Modern: The Lombard Family

*George F. F. and Mary Esther Lombard House, 441 Glen Road (1950-52)
Architect: Hugh Stubbins. Builder: Custance Bros., Inc.

George and Mary Esther Lombard moved to Weston in 1937 and initially rented buildings on the Charles Jones estate on Glen Road. George Lombard was a professor of Human Relations and later Associate Dean at Harvard Business School. According to daughter Emily Lombard Hutcheson, it was her mother who wanted a modern house. She had grown up in California and had a strong artistic sense. The couple hired Hugh Stubbins, a modern architect and professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. At the time the Lombards had six children, and Mary Esther told Stubbins she wanted room for a dozen (ultimately, there were seven). She wanted the kitchen to be central, and it was the heart of the house.



Left: Emily Lombard in the kitchen at 441 Glen Road, and (below) playing in the snow in front of the house in the 1950s. (Courtesy Emily Lombard Hutcheson)

The kitchen overlooked the playroom and was open to the living room, dining room, and Mr. Lombard’s desk/work area, with only built-in-counters marking the divisions. “Really, it was just one large open area—this is what Mother wanted,” according to Hutcheson. There

were six bedrooms. When it came to bathrooms, “Mom wanted to be sure there was no waiting, so there were five small places that one could close a door on oneself. One had just a sink.”

The house was sited in the middle of the woods on top of a hill, with rock ledge all around. According to Hutcheson, the Olmsted Brothers firm may have worked with Stubbins on the siting and driveway placement. Public rooms were on one level and bedrooms were either up or down a half-level, such that the house conformed nicely to the contours of the land. Stubbins oriented the house facing south, and it had beautiful views of the sunset to the west.

“The house had an open plan on the inside” says Hutcheson, “and because of the large plate glass windows, it was open to the outside as well, almost like living outside. It was a great house to grow up in.” Overhanging eaves blocked the summer sun but allowed winter sun to warm the interior. At one end was a large clothes yard where laundry was hung out to dry.



Josh Lombard was 10 years old when the house was built. Home movies show him directing the bulldozers, and he became an architect. Emily Lombard Hutcheson recalls that her mother was unusual. She liked starting the day with her husband, away from the children. No matter what the weather, they would have breakfast outside in one of several favorite spots. “Dad would carry out a tray with bread, jam, and a toaster that could be plugged into an outdoor plug. Mom followed with omelets on two heavy china plates,” she recalled. Emily remembers making toasted cheese sandwiches outside for lunch. “Some of my happiest memories are of eating outside in the snow.”

In the mornings, Mrs. Lombard always had the school lunches ready. She would decorate the lunch bags in crayon each day, with the different design for each child. She was very creative, and “this was her way of including something beautiful in her day,” her daughter explains.

Emily Lombard moved from Brook School Building C to the newly built Country School in the middle of first grade. Because it was also designed by Hugh Stubbins, she felt right at home. No. 441 Glen Road remained in the family until 2004, and the new owners have chosen to preserve it.

Eleanor Raymond: Pioneer in Contemporary Design and Energy Conservation

Not only was Eleanor Raymond (1888-1989) a successful woman architect at a time when the profession was dominated by men, but she was also a prolific innovator interested in the modern aesthetic, solar power, environmental compatibility, and new structural technologies. By necessity and choice, she concentrated on domestic architecture. She was interested in how people live and how to improve that life by providing convenience, comfort, and beauty in daily living spaces.

Raymond was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and educated at Wellesley College (Class of 1909) and the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for Women. After practicing for almost a decade with Henry Atherton Frost, she opened her own office in Boston in 1928. In 1931, she designed and built a house in Belmont recognized as one of the first International Style examples in the United States. Rather than simply importing the style as she had seen it in Germany, she transformed it by using rough-sawn cedar boarding in keeping with New England landscape and building traditions.