

# **Rainy Nights at Strand-on-the-Green with Cheerful Friends: Rediscovering Theo Crosby's Original New Brutalist House**

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## **Abstract**

In 1952, Alison and Peter Smithson designed their Soho House in central London. Published by their housemate Theo Crosby in *Architectural Design* magazine, the Smithsons claimed it as the first example of the “New Brutalism,” though it remained unbuilt. At the same time, Crosby designed for himself a small studio house at Strand-on-the-Green, West London which he built but which remains unpublished, even though it shares many of the Soho House’s Brutalist characteristics. This article makes use of Rudolf Wittkower’s proportional theories – dear to New Brutalist discourse – to analyze and compare the two houses. Through analysis of the original drawings, New Brutalist discourse, and the biography of its architect, the article examines Crosby’s house for the first time, contextualizes it in terms of the New Brutalist canon, and considers possible reasons for its previous oversight.

**Keywords:** Theo Crosby; Alison and Peter Smithson; New Brutalism; Soho House

## **Image captions**

Figure 1. The first plans for 55, Thames Road by Edward Armitage and Theo Crosby.

Figure 2. Planning drawings by Edward Armitage and Theo Crosby for 55, Thames Road dated June 20, 1952.

Figure 3. Interior of the house, circa 1954. The finishes are sparse – painted brick walls, concrete floor in the kitchen covered only by coir rugs in the living room; a single light bulb hangs from the plaster-boarded ceiling, and a feature concrete couch on bricks divides the kitchen from the living room. Photo courtesy of Dido Crosby.

Figure 4. The composition of the plan of the Soho House showing the use of root-2 rectangles, and the use of the golden ratio in the composition of the elevation. Both plan and elevation redrawn by the author (not to scale) from originals in the Alison and Peter Smithson Archive, courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Figure 5. The composition of the plan of Crosby's house showing the use of the golden ratio. Redrawn by the author (not to scale). The correspondence of the golden spiral is not as exact as in the case of the Soho House because the measurements have been taken from the house as built rather than from the blurry planning drawings, demonstrating the compromise that always occurs in translation from the ideal to constructed reality.

Figure 6. Evidence of the use of regulating lines, some of which are derived from the golden ratio, on the elevations of Crosby's house. The original planning drawings are used as, despite their poor quality, they provide sufficient accuracy for visual analysis. The blue rectangles show golden rectangles and the green are root-2 rectangles.

Figure 7. Crosby and Banham photographed by Sam Lambert in the 1950s (Courtesy Sam Lambert / AboutTheImage.com).

Figure 8. View of the house today.

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## **Rainy Nights at Strand-on-the-Green with Cheerful Friends: Rediscovering Theo Crosby's Original New Brutalist House**

### ***Introduction***

Theo Crosby became an editor at *Architectural Design (AD)* magazine in October 1953 and in the first issue that he worked on – that of December 1953 – he published Alison and Peter Smithson's Soho House project.<sup>1</sup> That small article has since become famous as a seminal piece in the historiography of the New Brutalism because it was there the Smithsons wrote that, had the design been built, "it would have been the first exponent of the 'New Brutalism' in England."<sup>2</sup> The project was for a simple four-story single-bedroomed house with studio that the couple designed for themselves in 1952 on a site just off Tottenham Court Road in central London. They wrote in the *AD* article, "it is our intention in this building to have the structure exposed entirely, without internal finishes wherever practicable. The Contractor should aim at a high standard of basic construction as in a small warehouse."<sup>3</sup> Even though it was never built, this austere, unfinished brick, concrete, and timber warehouse aesthetic helped define the New Brutalist discourse and has since become a reference point for considering the historiography of New Brutalist architecture.<sup>4</sup> But it was the couple's school at Hunstanton, completed in 1954, that the New Brutalism's chronicler, Reyner Banham, identified as the first built example of the movement in Britain.<sup>5</sup>

So much attention has been focused on Banham and the Smithsons in the historiography of the New Brutalism that Crosby's own architectural contribution has been overlooked. Crosby's significant role in promoting his close friends the Smithsons (amongst others) in publications and exhibitions has been widely acknowledged,<sup>6</sup> but his own built work, at least from before his Pentagram years – Pentagram being the multidisciplinary design practice he established in 1972 with Alan Fletcher, Colin Forbes, Kenneth Grange, and Mervyn Kurlansky, and now the self-proclaimed "world's largest independently-owned design studio" – has received almost no attention.<sup>7</sup> While this is, no doubt, how he preferred it, this article will describe the first house that he designed and built for himself in 1952 and situate it within the context of the birth of the New Brutalism. It will establish how Crosby came to be so close to the epicenter of Brutalist discourse before arguing that he was not just an *éminence grise* overshadowed by Banham and the

Smithsons, but that he played a fundamental role in the creation of this movement that has come to be as celebrated as it is derided, and, crucially that he not only talked and wrote about it, but constructed one of its first examples.

### ***Crosby's Early life***

In the historiography of post-war architecture, Crosby is arguably best known for his role as Monica Pidgeon's Technical Editor at *Architectural Design* magazine (between 1953 and 1962), for editing other "little" magazines such as *Uppercase* (1958-1961) and *Living Arts* (1963-1964), for curating exhibitions such as "This is Tomorrow" at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1956 and for bringing together the Archigram group at Taylor Woodrow.<sup>8</sup> In other words, he is best known for promoting artists and architects other than himself through publications and exhibitions. But not only did he relentlessly publish his friends – especially the Smithsons – he actively influenced their ideas. He was known for being highly intelligent, enjoying engaging conversation, and encouraging a sympathy for classical architecture in modernist discourse and for integrating art with architecture. A brief examination of his early years will help explain how his ideas emerged.

Crosby was born in Mafeking, South Africa on April 3, 1925. His father had been an international rugby player for the Springboks but ended up a Compound Manager at a manganese mine, where Crosby grew up a lonely only child. Theo, who "admired his father," "felt himself a physical failure" because of his own poor eyesight and physical clumsiness.<sup>9</sup> He compensated with his intellect: his first wife Anne recalled his mother narrating various tales of Theo's "colossally good mind," such as how he taught himself to read and write before attending school by listening in at the mines' school lodge.<sup>10</sup> Throughout his life he continued to value intelligence more than anything. Because of his intellect – and his height – Crosby was able to attend Jeppe High School two years ahead of his real age.<sup>11</sup> He went on to win a scholarship to study architecture at Witwatersrand University, starting there in 1941 at the age of only fifteen. The same year he began his first job in the architect's department of the Johannesburg City Council, laying out houses "along the roads of an African location, or housing estate [...] more or less at random [...] with uncritical enthusiasm."<sup>12</sup>

The school of architecture at Wits was then small – in 1940 it had only “5 students in all and a teaching staff of 1 professor, 4 full-time lecturers and 1 part-time lecturer.”<sup>13</sup> It was also heavily under the influence of Rex Martienssen, an early advocate of modernism in South Africa, member of CIAM, President of the Transvaal Institute of Architects, and editor of the *South African Architectural Record (SAAR)*. *SAAR* was very much Martienssen’s mouthpiece: he often wrote entire issues himself, including many articles on architectural history, and it was basically considered the Wits school magazine.<sup>14</sup> Martienssen had become a friend and advocate of Le Corbusier having twice visited him in Paris in the 1930s.<sup>15</sup> Their close understanding was underlined when Corbusier dedicated the first volume of his *Oeuvre Complète 1910-1929* to the Transvaal Architecture Group, in response to the first and only issue of the “little magazine” that the Group published proclaiming the virtues of a new technologically and functionally driven architecture.<sup>16</sup> Martienssen also greatly valued architectural history: his 1941 Doctoral thesis was on “The Idea of Space in Greek Architecture” and he was remembered as an enthusiastic teacher of classical architecture.<sup>17</sup> As the school’s lecturer on the history of architecture, he would have undoubtedly taught Crosby.<sup>18</sup> Under the Transvaal Group’s influence, the school also promoted Walter Gropius’s idea of the unity of the arts and architecture, a belief that Crosby held onto throughout his life.<sup>19</sup>

### ***The effect of the war***

Between July 1944 and March 1946 Crosby volunteered for the army, spending time as a signalman in the allied invasion of Italy as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> South African armored division.<sup>20</sup> Driving round Italy for several months after its liberation was an experience that changed his perception of architecture and consequently the course of his life. Alan Powers has noted that Crosby’s “observation of the dense Italian hill towns, with their unity of architectural and social form, taught him about ‘normal urban life, intricate, static and secure,’ in contrast to the shiftless culture of his upbringing.”<sup>21</sup> Crosby fell in love with what he saw of classical civilization and European culture. For him, it contrasted with the violence of nature that he had witnessed in his South African childhood; one of his abiding memories was watching baboons tear his dog apart.<sup>22</sup> He returned to South Africa to complete his architecture qualification, but only in order to go back to Europe as quickly as possible – Peter Smithson recalled that Crosby came to live in London in order to holiday in Italy.<sup>23</sup> Crosby landed in Southampton on October

11, 1947,<sup>24</sup> and stayed at Goodenough House in Bloomsbury, London, “a hall of residence for male students from the British ‘Dominions’ [that ...] aimed to create a collegiate setting that would enhance international understanding and prevent students from feeling isolated in the British capital.”<sup>25</sup> Apartheid was sanctioned by the South African government in 1948, giving more reason for Crosby never to return to live in his homeland. He registered as a British citizen on March 20, 1951.<sup>26</sup>

According to Anne Crosby, Theo “arrived in England knowing where he wanted to go, and who he wanted to work for.”<sup>27</sup> Max Fry and Jane Drew had given lectures at Wits while in Johannesburg for Drew’s nephew’s wedding and her anti-apartheid message deeply affected him.<sup>28</sup> So he asked for a job at their Gloucester Place office, where he worked on “schools for Ghana, and the Festival of Britain, and the first part of Harlow New Town.”<sup>29</sup> Monica Pidgeon even claimed that Crosby became “Jane’s right hand.”<sup>30</sup> Fry and Drew had established their practice immediately after the war and were one of the most celebrated and well-connected practices at that time. Iain Jackson and Jessica Holland note that “in austerity Britain – like many other architectural practices during the late 1940s – Fry and Drew also looked overseas, mostly to the British Empire, for new commissions. [...] With British building restrictions in force, the prospect of work at home was limited and Fry and Drew therefore focused much of their attention on West African projects.”<sup>31</sup> No doubt Crosby’s experience in Africa helped his application to work there.

Besides establishing himself in one of the leading practices of the time, Crosby also immediately enrolled in evening classes to study sculpture at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, where he met like-minded young artists and designers such as Edward Wright and Richard Hamilton, as well as his future Pentagram partners Fletcher and Forbes.<sup>32</sup> Drew also introduced Crosby to her milieu, to the Modern Architecture Research Group (MARS), “to liven it up,”<sup>33</sup> and to the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). Later, Crosby – who always really felt himself to be more of an artist than an architect – remarked that the ICA “became a kind of club for my kind.”<sup>34</sup>

Crosby’s friend and compatriot, Peter Rawstorne, recalled that while at Fry and Drew, “Crosby was dogged, working long hours, almost unceasingly, but without desire for personal gain (although some inevitably accrued) through these years.”<sup>35</sup> Crosby

himself remembered that the Fry and Drew office was “filled with passers through, waiting for the summer to travel to Europe, returning in the autumn penniless to beg for another few months [sic] work.”<sup>36</sup> It was on his first summer holiday in Italy that Crosby met Peter Smithson at the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence.<sup>37</sup> They immediately hit it off and Smithson remembered how Crosby “had a two room flat in Bloomsbury, and he said I could share it with him when I came back from Italy, and he’d gone back to work.”<sup>38</sup> So in the autumn of 1948 while Smithson attended the Royal Academy School “in the hope of acquiring a more convincing form of classical expertise,”<sup>39</sup> they started sharing the ground floor flat at 32 Doughty Street, immediately adjacent to Goodenough House. This was the beginning of the pair’s close, intense friendship that continued for many years – Smithson, for example, was Crosby’s best man when he married the painter Anne Buchanan in 1960.<sup>40</sup> After a year of flat-sharing, Smithson married Alison Gill.<sup>41</sup> The Smithsons remained in the ground floor flat while Crosby moved upstairs to one previously occupied by the Canadian architect Wells Coates.<sup>42</sup> Anne Crosby recalled that the Smithsons effectively became Crosby’s surrogate family in Britain; he was “theirs to dominate, theirs to command, something like your family’s attitude to you, which makes them almost kin.”<sup>43</sup>

### ***Cohabitation***

The Smithsons and Crosby developed a very close friendship during the time they cohabited in Bloomsbury and clearly spent a lot of time together discussing architecture. Peter Smithson, for example, talked about the strong influence that Rex Martienssen’s ideas of Greek architecture had on his thinking through a *SAAR* magazine that Crosby had brought from South Africa.<sup>44</sup> Crosby’s sketchbooks also contain many sketches of Alison, one of several strong woman to whom he became particularly close in his life.<sup>45</sup> Anne Crosby later complained that Alison made Theo into a kind of “domestic pet.”<sup>46</sup>

It was in 1949, while living in Doughty Street with Crosby, that the Smithsons designed and won the competition for the school at Hunstanton, which helped them become *the* pre-eminent young architects of the post-war period, “the bell-wethers [sic] of the young throughout the middle fifties.”<sup>47</sup> With Crosby still working at Fry and Drew, and the Smithsons briefly at the LCC (London County Council), the three of them also collaborated on competition projects such as a “vertical feature” and a restaurant for the Festival of Britain.<sup>48</sup> Living with the Smithsons, working at Fry and Drew, participating

in MARS and the ICA and studying at the Central School, Crosby was at the very heart of the architectural avant-garde. However, while he was ambitious, according to everyone's accounts he wasn't a great architect himself, and was more interested in sculpture.<sup>49</sup>

By 1952, Crosby and the Smithsons had been living at 32, Doughty Street for three years and were looking to build their own houses. With Hunstanton School nearing completion, the Smithsons probably wanted room for their office to be within their own house, a home-work relationship they continued throughout their life, and so designed the so-called "Soho House" at 24 Colville Place.<sup>50</sup> Crosby was attracted to the social scene at Strand-on-the-Green, a "village" on the north bank of the Thames in Chiswick, West London, where his friend and colleague at Fry and Drew, Edward Armitage, introduced him to an interesting group of intellectuals, artists, architects, and writers.<sup>51</sup> At the age of 27, Crosby's sketchbooks reveal something about his feelings for the life he'd constructed for himself and his prospects ahead. Pondering on a film script he was writing, he scribbled:

To write this sort of thing one must live alone – to work up the necessary neurosis. For the last 2 years I have been tapped of each emotion as it comes. Nice boys to talk to – the occasional woman coming in + draining the scrotum. To look forward to – rainy nights at Strand on the Green with cheerful friends popping in for gossip – and not enough guts to throw them out. How I have weakened – I have even considered marriage. Resolution – drop my friends + work. Too soon for this jolly life.<sup>52</sup>

It is not clear whether "friends" refers specifically to the Smithsons or his wider circle, but what is clear is his ambition to make something of himself through his work. "Rainy nights at Strand on the Green" refers to the house for which he had just obtained planning permission and which Armitage was instrumental in making happen. Anne Crosby remembered that her husband "liked the establishment aspect of Edward. That was the sort of 'what you come to England for' kind of aspect."<sup>53</sup> Armitage's father, Joseph, had trained as an architect but became a wood- and stone-carver and an early member of the Art Workers' Guild, collaborating with Sir Herbert Baker on various projects such as the new Bank of England (1925-1939). The Armitages lived in the most prominent house in Strand-on-the-Green: No. 1, Strand Green House. In February 1952,



Armitage and Crosby submitted a planning application for “the erection of three garages with residential studio over” on a plot of land around the corner.<sup>54</sup> Drawn in Armitage’s hand but with a title block that included the names of both architects, the design was an unremarkable pitched-roof affair with a row of first-floor windows that stretched the full width of the building at both the front and rear (Figure 1).

The application was approved on condition that “only one point of vehicular access be permitted on Thames Road frontage.” This effectively required the building to be rotated 90 degrees, and thus led Armitage and Crosby to submit a completely revised application, this time for “the erection of two garages and a residential studio,” for which permission was again granted.<sup>55</sup> The plans were submitted on behalf of L.L. Lasenby, who owned the land. As the freehold title of the land is still in the Lasenby family, it is likely that Crosby designed the house for himself to rent.<sup>56</sup> There are two drawings in the planning application, on which the handwriting suggests that the plans were drawn by Armitage and the elevation by Crosby.<sup>57</sup> Armitage had by this time left Fry and Drew and was about to set off to work in India; the planning approval is addressed to Crosby alone.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, the original architects’ drawings for the house no longer exist. The only trace of them is the drawings submitted for planning, which are of very poor quality due to their retrieval from microfiche (Figure 2).

Nevertheless, it is possible to make out a very basic two-story house with a mono-pitch roof exaggerating the small step up from the rear garden to the street, a step that is evident at both the ground and first floors. The house has a much more modern frontage to Thames Road than the first design, with a single large first-floor, almost double-height window. As this faces North East, we might assume that this would have been intended to be Crosby’s sculpting studio. However, the plans suggest that the first floor is residential, with an open-plan kitchen and living room, partially separated from the front bedroom by a dwarf wall and sliding door. Adjacent to this sliding door in the bedroom were built-in cupboards along the south-east wall with a built-in sleeping platform overhead. The studio would therefore have been on the ground floor, behind the two garages and overlooking the garden to the rear.<sup>59</sup> It is labeled “Bedroom 2” on the plans, but the only access is from an external door to the garden, making it hard to believe that it really was a bedroom. The plan is split into two halves along the long central axis: the long north-west wall, situated on the plot’s boundary, contains no

openings, but the windows on the north-east and south-west elevations extend from that boundary wall to the longitudinal center line. The light for the north-west side, therefore, comes from the front and back, and the lack of internal divisions would have made it feel very open. The kitchen is located to the rear of the house, three steps down from the living room which has a stove in the center. The dwarf wall between the living room and bedroom extends half way, admitting light from the large front window into the center of the house. The long south-east wall, which faces a courtyard/drive, contains windows to the living room and bathroom. Figure 3 shows the kitchen as viewed from the living room with a fabulous concrete couch between the spaces, and large cushions in the living room on what look like coir mats.

On November 2, 1952, Crosby wrote a rather depressed letter from his new house to Drew in Chandigarh, telling her that he'd used his Christmas box

to pay for a deposit on a minute motorcycle which is to be my companion for the next few years. Because it is farewell to delicious Bloomsbury and from now on the daily trek to my new studio at Strand on the Green. My rudest critics say it looks like June Park but its [sic] really quite nice + not at all as cosy. Anyway, I move into it next week.<sup>60</sup>

Park was an architect who had studied at the Architectural Association during the war, after which she designed many houses in a polite Scandinavian modernist style. By 1952 she had designed several, including one in Highgate, London, for her and her husband, the Finnish architect Cyril Mardall (of the practice Yorke Rosenberg Mardall) and another immediately adjacent for his mother. The latter was constructed on a sloping site and contained first-floor living quarters with a large open-plan living area centered around a stove immediately adjacent to a smaller bedroom; it has steps up to the front door with a bin store underneath. This is similar to Crosby's house in arrangement, though whereas Park's house has a flat roof and sloping site, Crosby's has a flat site and sloping roof. Park's houses tended to be of brick construction with either a flat or very shallow pitched roof and included a mixture of small and large windows with portions of wall clad in vertical timber boards. Externally, Crosby's design has some of these characteristics, and is perhaps superficially reminiscent of Park's work. The implication of the "rudest critics" would have been that his studio house was too polite, perhaps too feminine, and – the ultimate insult – too "cosy." It would have been that Crosby's house was redolent of the Swedish-style picturesque architecture of the

New Empiricism that the *Architectural Review* (*Architectural Design*'s chief rival) was peddling —the very antithesis of the New Brutalism.<sup>61</sup> The interiors of Park's houses really were quite cozy, with contemporary photographs showing traditional furnishings, fabrics, and rugs gathered around a stone fireplace.<sup>62</sup>

According to the planning applications, Crosby's house was designed between April 21 and June 19, 1952. While it is impossible to be more specific than the year of 1952 for the Smithsons' drawings of the Soho House, it is likely that the two were designed within months, if not weeks of each other. Given the fact that the Smithsons and Crosby were so close, living in the same house, collaborating on projects — no doubt sharing ideas — and that both projects were for small studio-houses in London, it is not hard to imagine that they were both experiments in the same New Brutalist ideology, or "ethic." However, instead of publishing his own house, which *was* built, Crosby took the first opportunity he had as co-editor of *AD* to publish the Smithsons' unbuilt house in his first issue of December 1953. Through analysis and comparison of each house's "ethic" and "aesthetic," the remainder of this article will situate Crosby's forgotten Strand-on-the-Green studio-house within the nascent movement of the New Brutalism.

### ***The New Brutalist ethic of the Strand-on-the Green and Soho Houses***

The historiography of the New Brutalism that we have inherited has been predominantly constructed from the writings of Reyner Banham, specifically his original article in the *Architectural Review* of December 1955, and its subsequent re-rendering in his 1966 book *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?*<sup>63</sup> He introduced the former with the words:

What has been the influence of contemporary architectural historians on the history of contemporary architecture?

They have created the idea of a Modern Movement [...] and beyond that they have offered a rough classification of the 'isms' which are the thumb-print of Modernity into two main types: One, like Cubism, is a label, a recognition tag, applied by critics and historians to a body of work which appears to have certain consistent principles running through it, whatever the relationship of the artists; the other, like Futurism, is a banner, a slogan, a policy consciously adopted by a group of artists, whatever the apparent similarity or dissimilarity of their

products. And it is entirely characteristic of the New Brutalism [...] that it should confound these categories and belong to both at once.<sup>64</sup>

I have argued elsewhere that Banham's definition of the movement was quite different from that of the Smithsons (and, by implication, Crosby) and the subtitle of Banham's book characteristically splits the movement into two factions – his aesthetic and their ethic.<sup>65</sup> As architects, the Smithsons and Crosby were developing between them “a banner, a slogan, a policy consciously adopted,” whereas for art historian Banham it was “a label, a recognition tag.” In the quote above, Banham suggested that the movement was simultaneously both, yet his book concluded that “for all its brave talk of ‘an ethic, not an aesthetic,’ Brutalism never quite broke out of the aesthetic frame of reference.”<sup>66</sup> In other words, for him it was just an aesthetic.

The Smithsons, on the other hand, insisted that Brutalism was an ethic and, having not been consulted for Banham's book, were left to refute his conclusion for the remainder of their careers, starting with their review in the *Architects Journal* in which they could merely point out “errors of fact and misinterpretation.”<sup>67</sup> Dirk van den Heuvel has identified the times that the Smithsons rebutted Banham's popular definition, from their remark in *AD* that “up to now Brutalism has been discussed stylistically, whereas its essence is ethical” to their footnote in *Without Rhetoric* noting that their “respect for materials – a realisation of the affinity which can be established between building and man – which was at the root of our way of seeing and thinking about things that we called New Brutalism” had “not much to do with the Brutalism that popularly became lumped into the style outlined in Reyner Banham's *The New Brutalism*.”<sup>68</sup> Finally Peter Smithson's very late remark that Brutalism “was not what Reyner Banham was talking about” left no room for ambiguity.<sup>69</sup> It is very clear, therefore, that the architects' idea of what the New Brutalism should be was very different to that of the art historian and critic.

An early Crosby-Smithson definition, which van den Heuvel has identified as the Smithsons' motivating project for the New Brutalism, appeared as a rather opaque “manifesto” printed as the editorial to the January 1955 issue of *AD* (figure 1 of Juliana Kei's article in this issue).<sup>70</sup> Crosby's introduction to the series of numbered statements that constitute the manifesto mentioned “certain lessons in the formal use of proportion (from Prof. Wittkower) and a respect for the sensuous use of each material (from the

Japanese).”<sup>71</sup> The Smithsons’ seven statements talk about the relationship between nature, man, material, and form, especially with respect to Japanese architecture. New Brutalism was clearly a set of loosely linked, quite abstract ideas that the Smithsons and Crosby had been developing between themselves, ideas that still needed interpreting; by that time, only Hunstanton School had actually been realized as a constructed example.

Eleven months later, Banham provided a much more considered and concise definition of New Brutalism: “1, Memorability as an Image; 2, Clear exhibition of Structure; and 3, Valuation of Materials ‘as found’.”<sup>72</sup> This definition prevailed and has endured because it was so clearly and precisely articulated and so quickly and widely disseminated. In contrast, the Smithsons never articulated such a memorable definition. Perhaps the closest they ever got was in their response to John Davies and Denys Lasdun’s “Thoughts in Progress” article discussing the movement towards the end of its “first phase,” where they wrote,

Any discussion of Brutalism will miss the point if it does not take into account Brutalism’s attempt to be objective about “reality” – the cultural objectives of society, its urges, its techniques and so on. Brutalism tries to face up to a mass-production society, and drag a rough poetry out of the confused and powerful forces which are at work.<sup>73</sup>

From this we can understand that the Brutalist discourse that Crosby and the Smithsons had developed was about responding realistically to the society they found themselves in after the war – a society of deep austerity and “make do and mend.” This New Brutalist “ethic,” as developed by the Crosby-Smithsons axis, was a direct development of the “architecture as the direct result of a way of life” advocated in their manifesto, and it generated both the Soho House and Crosby’s Strand-on-the-Green house.<sup>74</sup> So it is in the way the houses reflected the lives that the architects found themselves living in 1952 that we might find evidence for how they imagined the New Brutalist ethic could be made manifest – in identifying how they were objective about their reality, how they dragged a “rough poetry” out of post-war austerity, how they made the most of the materials and space available. As Vidler has pointed out, brick was the cheapest and most available building material in those austere years.<sup>75</sup>

Both houses were designed as a simple studio-house – vertically ordered in the case of the Smithsons’ and horizontally in Crosby’s. The Smithsons’ architectural studio was

located on the ground floor of the Soho house, open to the entrance and easily accessible to clients, leaving their private living quarters stacked above. In contrast, Crosby's sculpting studio was hidden away, accessible only from the garden, while the main entrance led directly to the open-plan living spaces; Crosby enjoyed living a full bachelor's life during his four years at Thames Road, a period that Peter Smithson remembered their "close period extended into."<sup>76</sup> Like the Soho House, Crosby's house was inexpensive, austere, and (as he was at pains to point out to Drew) "not at all cosy," as the photograph in figure 3 demonstrates (unfortunately, this is the only photograph of the original house that has survived).<sup>77</sup> As described above, it was practical and economic in form and material: a real bachelor pad in which to sculpt, to store his motorbike, to gossip with cheerful friends he didn't have the guts to throw out, to host the Smithsons on Sunday mornings for doughnuts and coffee,<sup>78</sup> to throw parties with fireworks and throw fireworks at parties,<sup>79</sup> and to seduce the occasional woman.

Crosby's house may appear more polite than the Smithsons', but the two undoubtedly share the same "ethic." Crosby's floors were concrete, as was the Smithsons' ground floor, and the walls of both houses were brick which was exposed internally (painted white in Crosby's). Both houses' roofs were made from corrugated asbestos sheeting with a plasterboard soffit. However, the front elevation of the Soho House was tougher, more uncompromising, with exposed concrete lintels, whereas Crosby covered his lintel with oiled hardwood sheeting and placed a flower box on the window sill. It was these moves that made the street façade appear "like June Park," clearly a sore point for Crosby; in his next house in Hammersmith, he unnecessarily exaggerated the concrete lintels on the street elevation as if to make a point of them. Nevertheless, both Crosby's and the Smithsons' houses could certainly be considered examples of the "warehouse aesthetic" that the Smithsons referred to in that first *AD* piece.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Aesthetic similarities of the houses***

In the immediate post-war years, many young architects found that "theories of architectural proportion offered a means of re-humanizing architecture, and of introducing an aesthetic system acceptable to the scientifically minded establishment."<sup>81</sup> Le Corbusier had been using *tracés régulateurs*, or "regulating lines," since the composition of his Parisian studio-house for the painter Ozenfant in 1923. Their

presence was made known in a section of his *Vers une Architecture* devoted to the system, where he wrote of them:

An inevitable element of Architecture.

The necessity for order. The regulating line is a guarantee against wilfulness. It brings satisfaction to the understanding.

The regulating line is a means to an end; it is not a recipe. Its choice and the modalities of expression given to it are an integral part of architectural creation.<sup>82</sup>

He continued to develop his research into proportional systems, based on correspondence with the Romanian mathematician Matila Ghyka, whose books on the mathematical basis of beauty he not only owned, but also wrote about. He believed almost mystically in the ability of particular such systems to convey “the truth” of reality.<sup>83</sup> Le Corbusier’s research into proportional systems enjoyed considerable popularity, especially amongst students at the Architectural Association in the late 1940s, as demonstrated in issues of the *AA Journal* of 1946 and 1947.<sup>84</sup> The climax of this interest occurred on December 19, 1947, when the Master himself gave a lecture on the golden section to conclude the school’s centenary year celebrations.<sup>85</sup> His theories were finally published in French in *Le Modulor* of 1950 and translated to English four years later.<sup>86</sup>

Le Corbusier may have given credibility to the use of proportional systems in modern architecture, but there were competing ideas on how to link mathematical truth to beauty, some of which had the advantage of also connecting contemporary architecture with history. An alternative approach was to be found in Rudolf Wittkower’s *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, as mentioned in the Crosby-Smithsons’ *AD* manifesto.<sup>87</sup> The Smithsons’ first published piece had been a defense of Wittkower’s book, responding to a scathing review of it in the *RIBA Journal*.<sup>88</sup> *Architectural Principles* offered Crosby and the Smithsons, still under the influence of Martienssen, a continuum with the authority of history on which to base their own contemporary architectural theory. Eva-Marie Neumann and others have clearly shown that there was much discussion about the merit of Wittkower’s theories of proportion in the late 1940s and early 1950s,<sup>89</sup> with hotly debated articles and correspondence published in the professional architectural press.<sup>90</sup> The extent of interest in Wittkower’s ideas was underlined by the fact that he contributed a chapter on the subject for the

1953 *Architects' Year Book*, whose concern was “the presentation of current thought on the philosophy and practice in the art and technique of modern architecture.”<sup>91</sup> The first chapter in the book, it described how Wittkower hoped to “stimulate discussion about a problem that to-day is perhaps more on artists’ and architects’ minds than at any time during the last 150 years.”<sup>92</sup> Given their prevalence, and the Smithsons’ clear interest in them, it would not be surprising to find these proportional theories used as an aesthetic basis for the architectural projects of the nascent New Brutalists. And while Tod Gannon has roughly described a proportional system evident in the Soho House, a visual analysis, through drawing rather than words, can more strikingly demonstrate Wittkower’s proportional theories in the composition of both Crosby’s and the Smithsons’ houses.

After the geometrically pure circle and square, the third of Palladio’s seven “most beautiful ratios of width to length of rooms” that Wittkower lists is the diagonal of a square for the length of the room, with one side of the square for its width: “a root-2 rectangle” of the proportion  $1:\sqrt{2}$ .<sup>93</sup> The Smithsons took this as the proportional basis for their Soho House plan, as demonstrated in figure 4 which shows an accurately redrawn (though not printed to scale) first-floor plan. The same proportion is used in the “A” series of paper sizes, meaning that two sheets of paper of the same size can be positioned adjacent along their long side to form the next “A” size up, of the same ratio of width to length. This composition of rectangles therefore makes the overall footprint of the plan the same proportion if we take the wall and window thicknesses into account.<sup>94</sup> In terms of the elevation, however, the Smithsons appear to have used a golden rectangle: figure 4 also shows a golden spiral – a logarithmic spiral whose growth factor is the golden ratio  $\phi$  (approximately 1.618) and which fits into a golden rectangle – superimposed over the elevation. This demonstrates that the proportion of the width to the height of the three stories above ground is of the ratio  $1:\phi$ . It also shows that the width is almost exactly the same dimension as the first two stories (each story is 8’6” high and 16’11” wide). Squares and rectangles of the ratio 1:2 are also used as compositional tools for the door and windows across the elevation.

Whereas the Smithsons used a root-2 rectangle for their plans and golden ratio for the elevation, Crosby seems to have done the reverse, and used the golden rectangle – which can also be defined as the ratio  $A : B = B : (A + B)$  – as the basis of his plan. By



laying a golden spiral over the plan, the logic becomes clear: on the ground floor, the two garages form an almost perfect square (of width A) and the studio and store make up the length B. Furthermore, another, smaller golden rectangle is evident: the wall dividing the studio and store is also *almost* located so as to form the same “divine proportion,” the studio being the square. In this case  $B : C = C : (B + C)$  (Figure 5). The living room and bedroom on the first floor sit directly over the garages, making a square, and the kitchen and bathroom then sit over the studio and store below.

Crosby also used the golden rectangle for four of the five windows on the side and rear elevations and for the proportions of the main features of the principle street elevation, namely the large brick panel and large window that comprise the first-floor elevation (see blue rectangles in Figure 6). However, he used the root-2 rectangle for the actual window composition, employing the flower box to accommodate the difference in systems. Figure 6 also shows how Crosby used regulating lines, some of which were derived from the golden rectangle, in the composition of aspects of the facades.

While Crosby was not one of the “nucleus” of the Independent Group, he was “amongst those who would very occasionally attend one of the monthly meetings” and was friendly with Banham, as captured by Sam Lambert in the early 1950s (Figure 7).<sup>95</sup> So given Crosby’s propensity to host parties, Banham must have been aware of the house.<sup>96</sup> Which begs the question, if Crosby’s Strand-on-the-Green house and the Smithsons’ Soho House were designed at the same time from the same principles, why has Crosby’s house been completely ignored in the New Brutalist canon?

### ***“[Un]memorable as an Image”***

Theo Crosby was quite self-effacing and admitted that he enjoyed being an *éminence grise*, finding satisfaction in promoting his friends through the pages of his magazines and exhibitions ahead of himself.<sup>97</sup> He had no desire whatsoever to promote his own architectural work, so despite considering himself a New Brutalist in the 1950s, the debate about what constituted the movement and its canon was left to those who preferred to promote their own ideas in public, namely Alison and Peter Smithson and Reyner Banham.<sup>98</sup>

The second and third criteria of Banham's tripartite definition of the New Brutalism – “Clear exhibition of Structure” and “Valuation of Materials ‘as found’” – are related to the ethic that the architects attempted to communicate in their architecture and their discourse, as they concern the materiality of the building. His first criterion, however – that of “Memorability as an Image” – was all about the aesthetic, and clearly the one most valued by Banham. Crosby's house simply didn't fit this criterion, and just wasn't “Brutal” enough for inclusion in his canon. Louisa Hutton, who worked for the Smithsons in the 1980s, wrote how Peter Smithson remarked that Banham “didn't terribly like what we did, he drifted when our work did not fit his hypothesis.”<sup>99</sup> Crosby's architecture must have similarly not fitted his hypothesis. Crosby and the Smithsons' ideas about Brutalism clearly did not align with those of Banham, who simply didn't want to accept or engage with the ethic that lay at the heart of the architects' ideas. Banham was similarly reluctant to promote the historical basis of aesthetics that came via Wittkower: in his envoi at the end of the *New Brutalism*, he wrote, “The Johnsons, Johansens and Rudolphs of the American scene were quicker than I was to see that the Brutalists were really their allies, not mine; committed in the last resort to the classical tradition, not the technological,” and he called the ethic “backward-looking.”<sup>100</sup> Crosby's house must have been instantly unmemorable for the historian of the immediate future. And so, despite its similarity to the Soho House in terms of an early definition of Brutalism, and despite the fact that it still exists at 55, Thames Road, Strand-on-the-Green, albeit in a much extended and de-brutalized manner (Figure 8), it was lost to architectural history. Crosby himself went on to design and build a couple of more aesthetically recognizable Brutalist houses before renouncing Brutalism altogether, in a complete *volte face* that aligned him with the Prince of Wales' populist views on architecture in the 1980s. He consequently fell out of favor with the architectural establishment and, despite his considerable contribution to the birth of Brutalism, has himself been neglected in its history and its recent reevaluation.

### ***Postscript***

On reading the final draft of this article, Theo's daughter, Dido Crosby responded:

I have a very clear memory of dad drawing me the golden section and the spiral, getting infinitely smaller or bigger in either direction, which is the same way a

snail grows, in his tiny office in Rutland Grove, when I must have been about 7. He told me everything beautiful was designed around the golden section.

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<sup>1</sup> Crosby started as co-editor with Monica Pidgeon, but after a year his title was changed to "Technical Editor."

<sup>2</sup> Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, "House in Soho, London," *Architectural Design*, December 1953, 342.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, accounts of it in Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *The Architectural Review*, December 1955, 357; Todd Gannon, *Reyner Banham and the Paradoxes of High Tech* (Los Angeles: Yale University Press, 2017), 27-30; Anthony Vidler, "Another Brick in The Wall," *October*, no. 136 (Spring 2011), 110-11; Dirk van den Heuvel, Max Risselada, and Beatriz Colomina, eds., *Alison and Peter Smithson: From the House of the Future to a House of Today* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2004), 136-39.

<sup>5</sup> Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (London: The Architectural Press, 1966), 19.

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<sup>6</sup> Anne Massey, “The Independent Group and Little Magazines, 1956-64,” *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2 January 2018), 17-35; Dirk van den Heuvel, “Alison and Peter Smithson: a Brutalist Story, Involving the House, the City and the Everyday (plus a Couple of Other Things),” (PhD Dissertation, Delft University of Technology, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> I write “almost” because his building on the South Bank for the 1961 UIA congress has received some attention, due more to the congress than the building.

<sup>8</sup> Massey, “The Independent Group and Little Magazines, 1956-64,” 17-35; Steve Parnell, “AR’s and AD’s Post-War Editorial Policies: The Making of Modern Architecture in Britain,” *The Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 5 (October 2012), 763-75; Barry Curtis, “Tomorrow,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 12, no. 2 (2013), 279-91; Simon Sadler, “The Brutal Birth of Archigram,” in *The Sixties*, Twentieth Century Architecture 6 (London: Twentieth Century Society, 2002), 119-28.

<sup>9</sup> Anne Piper, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d. Anne Piper was a writer and a friend of Crosby’s. He built his second house at the bottom of her garden.

<sup>10</sup> Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d.

<sup>11</sup> Jeppe High School records state his birth date as April 3, 1923.

<sup>12</sup> Theo Crosby, “What Is Housing?” in *Housing People*, ed. Michael Lazenby (London: Ad Donker Publishers, 1977), 24.

<sup>13</sup> William Martinson, “University of the Witwatersrand School of Architecture (Wits School),” available online: [https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/style\\_det.php?styleid=299](https://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/style_det.php?styleid=299) (accessed January 12, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Gilbert Herbert and Mark Donchin, *The Collaborators: Interactions in the Architectural Design Process* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 152.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Barker, “A Mediated Modern Movement: Le Corbusier, South Africa and Gabriël Fagan,” *South African Journal of Art History* 30, no. 4 (2015), 69.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 87. For the dedication, see Willy Boesiger and Oscar Stonorov, eds., *Le Corbusier – Œuvre Complète Volume 1: 1910-1929*, 18th ed. (Berlin, Basel: Birkhäuser, 2015), 5-6. Of the Transvaal Architecture Group, Herbert has written that “At the core of [it] was a senior echelon: Rex Martienssen, Norman Hanson, and Gordon McIntosh” (Herbert and Donchin, *The Collaborators*, 150).

<sup>17</sup> See “The Teacher,” *South African Architectural Record*, November 1942, 329-31.



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The dissertation was published posthumously as Rex Distin Martienssen, *The Idea of Space in Greek Architecture: With Special Reference to the Doric Temple and its Setting* (Witwatersrand University Press, 1956).

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, “The Faculty of Architecture 1942,” *South African Architectural Record*, July 1942, 190.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert and Donchin, *The Collaborators*, 152.

<sup>20</sup> Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Parnell, January 13, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Powers, “Crosby, Theo (1925–1994), Designer and Architect,” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, January 1, 2017, available online: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/54828>.

<sup>22</sup> Dido Crosby, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Smithson, National Life Story Collection: Architects’ Lives. Peter Smithson (7 of 19), interview by Louise Brodie, September 4, 1997, British Library Sound Archive, <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Architects-Lives/021M-C0467X0024XX-0100V0> (accessed November 15, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> “RMMV Warwick Castle (The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company Ltd). List of Passengers Disembarking at Southampton,” October 11, 1947, BT 26/1230/51, The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>25</sup> “The History of Goodenough College,” available online: <http://www.goodenough.ac.uk/about-us/history> (accessed August 17, 2018). According to Goodenough’s archivist, Crosby left Goodenough on December 1, 1947. He is then listed on the electoral role as living at 156 Gloucester Place with 15 others on June 30, 1948 (Fry and Drew’s office was located at 63 Gloucester Place).

<sup>26</sup> Box 15, Theo Crosby Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Escritt.

<sup>28</sup> Jane Drew, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d.

<sup>29</sup> Theo Crosby, “Night Thoughts of a Faded Utopia”, in *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* (London: MIT Press, 1992), 197.

<sup>30</sup> Monica Pidgeon, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d.

<sup>31</sup> Iain Jackson and Jessica Holland, *The Architecture of Edwin Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew* (London: Ashgate, 2014), 120.

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<sup>32</sup> The Central School of Arts and Crafts became the Central School of Arts and Design in 1966 and in 1989 merged with Saint Martin's School of Art to form Central Saint Martin's College of Arts and Design. It is now part of the University of the Arts London.

<sup>33</sup> Drew, interview. Crosby is listed as a MARS member on the list of members dated May 18, 1950: Ove Arup, "Mars Group: List of Members," May 18, 1950, ArO/1/1/7, Sir Ove Arup Papers, RIBA Archives.

<sup>34</sup> Crosby, "Night Thoughts of a Faded Utopia," 197.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Rawstone, "Obituary: Professor Theo Crosby", *The Independent*, September 15, 1994, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-professor-theo-crosby-1448941.html> (accessed August 4, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Theo Crosby, "Inaugural Address," in *The Royal College of Art Architecture and Interior Design* (The Royal College of Art, London, 1992), 13.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Smithson, National Life Story Collection: Architects' Lives. There is a sketch of the library's interior in Crosby's sketchbook 7, unpaginated, dated October 1948 (Theo Crosby Archives, University of Brighton Design Archives). Although there's no evidence that this is what influenced both men to visit Michelangelo's masterpiece, Rudolf Wittkower had written a pioneering piece on it in 1934: Rudolf Wittkower, "Michelangelo's Biblioteca Laurenziana," *Art Bulletin* 16, no. 2 (June 1934), 123-218.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Smithson, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d.

<sup>39</sup> Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 1966, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Anne Crosby, *Matthew: A Memoir* (London: Haus Books, 2009), 50.

<sup>41</sup> On August 18, 1949. See Elain Harwood, "Smithson, Peter Denham (1923-2003), Architect, Writer, and Teacher," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, January 6, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/89834>.

<sup>42</sup> Crosby, "Night Thoughts of a Faded Utopia," 197.

<sup>43</sup> Crosby, *Matthew*, 50.

<sup>44</sup> Smithson, interview. Martienssen wrote extensively in the *SAAR*, but the particular article he could have been referring to was Rex Distin Martienssen, "Some Aspects of Doric Temple Architecture," *South African Architectural Record*, March 1942.

<sup>45</sup> Others included Anne Piper, Jane Drew, Monica Pidgeon and his second wife, artist Polly Hope.

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- <sup>46</sup> Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Escritt. See especially sketchbook 8 in the Theo Crosby Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.
- <sup>47</sup> Reyner Banham, “Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945-1965,” in *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, ed. John Summerson (London: Allen Lane, 1968), 270.
- <sup>48</sup> *Alison + Peter Smithson: The Shift*, Architectural Monographs 7 (London: Academy Editions, 1982), 96.
- <sup>49</sup> Drew, interview; Denys Lasdun, interview by Stephen Escritt, n.d.
- <sup>50</sup> This unification of life and work in the Soho House was also suggested by Mark Crinson, *Alison and Peter Smithson, Twentieth Century Architects* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2018), 13.
- <sup>51</sup> Marthe Armitage, interview by Stephen Parnell, April 6, 2019.
- <sup>52</sup> Sketchbook 34, unpaginated, dated August 20, 1952, Theo Crosby Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.
- <sup>53</sup> Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Escritt.
- <sup>54</sup> Planning application number 1116/55/P1, dated February 16, 1952 and granted on April 21, 1952.
- <sup>55</sup> Planning application number 1116/55/P2, dated June 19, 1952 and granted on August 13, 1952.
- <sup>56</sup> L.L. Lasenby was Liberty Llewellyn Lasenby, whose godfather was Sir Arthur Lasenby Liberty, the founder of Liberty & Co. (Liberty’s) of London.
- <sup>57</sup> Confirmed by Marthe Armitage: Armitage, interview.
- <sup>58</sup> Armitage left Fry and Drew in June 1952 and for India that September.
- <sup>59</sup> This arrangement of a south-facing ground floor studio leading onto the rear garden was repeated in Crosby’s next house at Hammersmith.
- <sup>60</sup> Theo Crosby to Jane Drew, November 2, 1952: Box 6 Folder F&D/6/4, Fry and Drew Archives, RIBA Archives. There is a motorbike license in Crosby’s archive dated February 2, 1953: Box 15 Theo Crosby Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.
- <sup>61</sup> “The New Empiricism: Sweden’s Latest Style,” *The Architectural Review*, June 1947, 199-204.

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- <sup>62</sup> Park is perhaps better known for two later books that explain the design and construction of modern houses to the public — see June Park, *Houses and Bungalows* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1958) and June Park, *Houses for Today* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1971).
- <sup>63</sup> Banham, “The New Brutalism,” December 1955; Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 1966.
- <sup>64</sup> Banham, “The New Brutalism,” December 1955, 354.
- <sup>65</sup> Steve Parnell, “From Behind Enemy Lines,” *CLOG*, 2013, 22-23; Stephen Parnell, “The Brutal Myth,” *Thresholds*, August, 2017,: 151-58.
- <sup>66</sup> Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 1966, 134.
- <sup>67</sup> Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, “Banham’s Bumper Book on Brutalism,” *Architects’ Journal*, December 28, 1966, 1590-91. On Banham’s lack of consultation with the Smithsons, see Robin Middleton, “The New Brutalism or a Clean, Well-Lighted Place,” *Architectural Design*, January 1967, 8; Dirk van den Heuvel, “Between Brutalists. The Banham Hypothesis and the Smithson Way of Life,” *The Journal of Architecture* 20, no. 2 (April 2015), 297.
- <sup>68</sup> Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, “The New Brutalism: Alison and Peter Smithson Answer the Criticisms on the Opposite Page,” *Architectural Design*, April 1957, 113; Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, *Without Rhetoric: Architectural Aesthetic, 1955-72* (London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1973), 6.
- <sup>69</sup> Peter Smithson and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, *Smithson Time: A Dialogue* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004), 17.
- <sup>70</sup> Alison Smithson, Peter Smithson, and Theo Crosby, “The New Brutalism,” *Architectural Design*, January 1955, 1; Dirk van den Heuvel, “Between Brutalists,” 293-308.
- <sup>71</sup> Smithson, Smithson and Crosby, “The New Brutalism,” 1.
- <sup>72</sup> Banham, “The New Brutalism,” December 1955, 361.
- <sup>73</sup> Smithson and Smithson, “The New Brutalism: Alison and Peter Smithson Answer the Criticisms on the Opposite Page,” 113. We should remember that this was also published in *AD* where Crosby was still Technical Editor. It is van den Heuvel who speaks of Brutalism’s “first phase” – see “Between Brutalists,” 298.
- <sup>74</sup> Smithson, Smithson and Crosby, “The New Brutalism,” 1.
- <sup>75</sup> Vidler, “Another Brick in The Wall,” 106-7.

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<sup>76</sup> Smithson, interview by Steven Escritt. Anne Crosby said that Theo “needed to feel like a bachelor” even when he was married to her: Anne Crosby, National Life Story Collection: Artists’ Lives. Anne Buchanan Crosby (11 of 16), interview by Linda Sandino, March 26, 2003, C466/142, British Library Sound Archive, <https://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Art/021M-C0466X0142XX-0011V0> (accessed July 2, 2019).

<sup>77</sup> Theo Crosby to Jane Drew, November 2, 1952, Box 6 Folder F&D/6/4, Fry & Drew Archives, RIBA Archives.

<sup>78</sup> Crosby, *Matthew*, 51.

<sup>79</sup> Anne Piper, interview; Theo Crosby to Bryan Robertson, June 8, 1956, WAG/EXH/2/45/1, Whitechapel Gallery Archive.

<sup>80</sup> Smithson and Smithson, “House in Soho,” 342.

<sup>81</sup> Eva-Marie Neumann, “Architectural Proportion in Britain 1945-1957,” *Architectural History* 39 (1996), 197.

<sup>82</sup> Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (London: John Rodker, 1931 [1923]), 67.

<sup>83</sup> Jean-Louis Cohen, “Le Corbusier’s Modulor and the Debate on Proportion in France,” *Architectural Histories* 2, no. 1 (September 24, 2014), 3, available online: <https://doi.org/10.5334/ah.by>

<sup>84</sup> Neumann, “Architectural Proportion in Britain 1945-1957,” note 17.

<sup>85</sup> An abridged transcript of the lecture appeared as Le Corbusier, “The Golden Section,” *Architects’ Journal*, January 8, 1948, 35-36.

<sup>86</sup> Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor: essai sur une mesure harmonique à l’échelle humaine applicable universellement à l’architecture et à la mécanique* (Boulogne: Editions de Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, 1950); Le Corbusier, *The Modulor: A Harmonious Measure to the Human Scale Universally Applicable to Architecture and Mechanics*, trans. Anna Bostock and Peter de Francia (London: Faber, 1954).

<sup>87</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (London: Alec Tiranti Ltd., 1952).

<sup>88</sup> Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, “Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism,” *RIBA Journal*, February 1952, 140, in response to A.S.G. Butler,

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“Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism,” *RIBA Journal*, December 1951, 59-60.

<sup>89</sup> Neumann, “Architectural Proportion in Britain 1945-1957”; Alina A. Payne, “Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no. 3 (September 1994), 322-42; Henry A. Millon, “Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism: Its Influence on the Development and Interpretation of Modern Architecture,” *Journal of The Society of Architectural Historians* 31, no. 2 (May 1972), 83-91.

<sup>90</sup> For example, Manning Robertson, “The Golden Section or Golden Cut: The Mystery of Proportions in Design,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, October 1948, 536-45; A. Leonard Roberts, “R’s Method: The Achievement of Proportion in Architectural Design,” *Architectural Design*, September 1948, 197-99, 214-16, 246-49, 272-74 and 1949, 17-20, 46-49; Mark Hartland Thomas, “Aesthetics the Vanguard Now,” *Architectural Design*, 1947; Colin Rowe, “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa,” *The Architectural Review*, March 1947, 101-4.

<sup>91</sup> Trevor Dannatt, ed., *Architects’ Year Book 5* (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1953), 7.

<sup>92</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, “Systems of Proportion,” in *Architects’ Year Book 5*, 9.

<sup>93</sup> Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 95.

<sup>94</sup> Gannon has previously discussed the proportions of the Soho House but did not consider the root-2 rectangle. He did, however, notice that the bed in the original drawing by the Smithsons was curiously long, and on further inspection, it appears to be drawn as a golden rectangle: Tod Gannon, *Reyner Banham and the Paradoxes of High Tech*, 29-30, 48 note 74.

<sup>95</sup> Anne Massey, *The Independent Group: Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain 1945-59* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 80.

<sup>96</sup> Mary Banham admitted that they must have attended some of Crosby’s parties during that time. Ben Banham to Stephen Parnell, “Theo Crosby’s Houses,” October 23, 2018.

<sup>97</sup> Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Parnell.

<sup>98</sup> In her interview with Stephen Escritt, Anne Crosby called Theo “very new Brutalist.” Anne Crosby, interview by Stephen Escritt.

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<sup>99</sup> Louisa Hutton, “Godparents’ Gifts,” in *Architecture Is Not Made with the Brain: The Labour of Alison and Peter Smithson*, eds. Pamela Johnston, Rosa Ainley, and Clare Barrett (London: Architectural Association, 2005), 56.

<sup>100</sup> Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 1966, 135.