

# CHARLES ROSE ARCHITECTS INC

PROJECTdata

## PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

### The Putney School

Putney, Vermont USA

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**Commissioned by:** The Putney School

**Scope:** 20,000 square feet; 300-seat auditorium with flexible seating and staging; dance studio with basket-weave floor; orchestra rehearsal rooms; flexible exhibition space: walls move and can create lockable gallery space; planted sedum roof; LEED Silver.

The Putney School, a boarding school and working farm, invited us to build a performing arts center amid its hilltop collection of quaint clapboard houses and a red barn. How we arrived at a contemporary building with folded roofs, bold forms, vibrant interior colors and high marks for environmental sensitivity is a story about the importance of consensus-building. Adding considerable complexity to the project was the large group of trustees, faculty and students who all wanted a say in the building's design and who had strong emotional ties to the campus.

Our design process was highly interactive with the Putney group; we frequently produced models and designs and didn't move forward until we were unified in purpose. A key agreement early on was that the building should look to the future. Scale was a consideration, too: The large footprint required for performance and exhibition space could have easily dwarfed the surrounding buildings. With this in mind, we chose a site that preserved the campus' open spaces and put the building snug against a wooded hill. As the design developed, we broke down the mass of the building to reduce the overall scale and impact. By introducing a series of folds in the roof, we created openings for natural light and a feeling of movement that expresses the activity within. Inside, bold colors heighten the experience of performance spaces; gallery walls can be moved to reconfigure exhibition space and views reconnect visitors to the landscape.

**Materials:** Stained concrete floors; glass; aluminum windows; cedar siding; Sarnafil roofing; steel; stainless steel; beech paneling; homasote panels; acoustical plaster.

**Completed:** 2004

**Cost:** \$5,200,000

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“Where do you site an enormous building on a campus full

of smaller buildings and beloved vistas? How do you design a modern, steel-framed building so that it blends unobtrusively with the whitewashed clapboard traditional to New England farms and to The Putney School? How bold—or, for that matter, how tame—should the design of a new performing arts center be if it wants to reflect what Michael S. Currier Center architect Charles Rose calls, ‘what is most alive on this campus—the artistic energy and spirit of the school?’ What exterior color would set such a building subtly apart from the other Putney buildings while looking as good as white does in all seasons? How can a building be functional for many purposes while, at the same time, meet Putney’s ‘green’ standards? According to Rose, these were the questions that he had to address with the trustees in a series of intensive conversations and workshops.”

Beckie Coffey, “Touring the Michael S. Currier Center,” *Putney Post*

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**Awards:**

American Institute of Architects New England Award for Design Excellence

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**Publications:**

Charles Rose, Architect, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2006.



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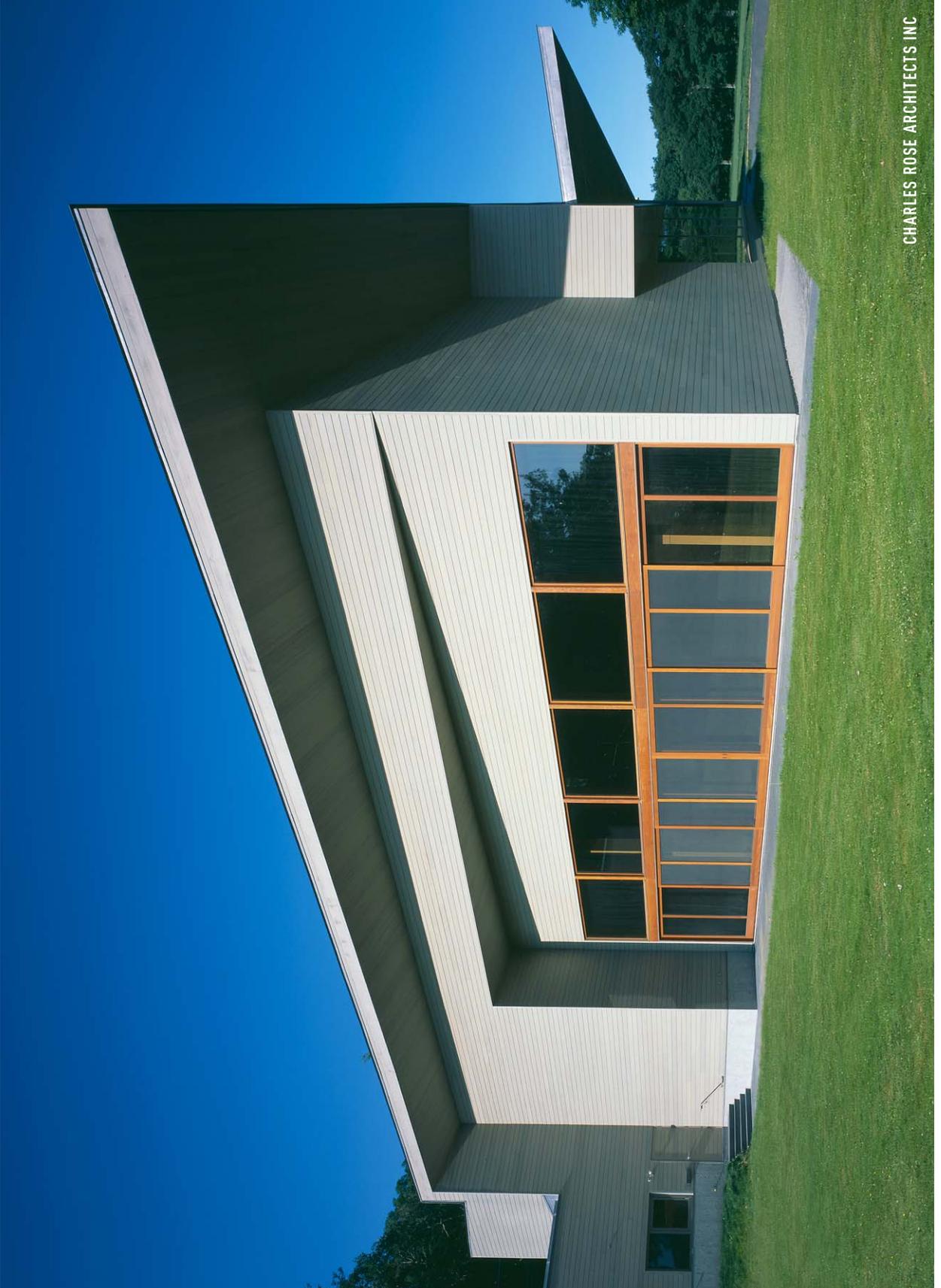
Michael S. Currier Center  
Temporary Exhibition  
Peters School Library 198 - 199  
April 1988 - June 1988, 2004

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