



Architect: Charles Haertling
Birth/Death Dates: October 28, 1928 – April 20, 1984
Practice Dates: 1957-1982
Firms: James M. Hunter & Associates (1953-1957)
Papachristou and Haertling, Associated Architects (1957-1959)
Charles Haertling, Architect (1959-1984)

Research compiled by Olivia Mack, UCD Student, 2022.

Biographical Information

Charles Haertling was born October 18, 1928, in Saint Genevieve, Missouri. Upon finishing high school, he served two years in the Navy from 1946 to 1948. He likely would have continued as a Navy Officer in Annapolis had he not been administered the Military aptitude tests. These tests by the Human Engineering Laboratories lead Haertling in the direction of architecture as a profession. After his service, he returned to Missouri to attend Washington University in St. Louis and studied architecture. Haertling earned his bachelor's degree in 1952.

The following year, in 1953, Haertling moved to Boulder, Colorado to become an architecture faculty member at University of Colorado Boulder. He would teach here twice in his career in two separate stints. The first was until 1955 and the second was 1965-1966. During his early years in Boulder, Haertling worked as a designer under other architects in the area such as James Hunter and Tician Papachristou. Haertling and Papacristou worked collaboratively from 1957 until 1959. In 1959, Haertling decided to take a leap and start his own architecture firm.

Haertling was a proud resident of Boulder and held several positions within the community. Most notably, has served as the Deputy Mayor from 1970-1971 and served on the city council for 3 terms from 1967-1973. He aimed to make contributions to the city in ways that improved the human experience and represented the unique nature of the city, and ruggedness of the nature surrounding it. He was a large supporter of the green belt around the city as well as the development of Pearl Street Mall. At other points in his life, Haertling was on various community art and architecture boards.

Throughout the 25-year span of his firm, Haertling designed over 40 buildings, most of which are located in Boulder. He intentionally kept his firm small as a means of quality control for his designs. This also allowed him to be choosy with which clients he took. Haertling interviewed potential clients to understand if they would mesh with their design visions. He was known to turn away those he did not think were a good fit.

The vast majority of his work consisted of residential houses. Haertling was insistent the houses only became homes once people inhabited them. Much of his design work aimed to capture the individualism of each of his clients. Haertling's designs were experimental and eccentric with no two buildings looking alike, but a common design language observed throughout his body of work.

Haertling is best known for his Organic architecture, but most works combine principles of Organic, Modernist, and Usonian designs. His work is compared to the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright, Bruce Goff, and Antoni Gaudi. Wright influences can be seen in his project with stronger Usonian design elements such as the Dammann house and Menkick house, which both have low profiles, strong horizontal elements, and natural materials. Goff is a natural comparison of work due to the eccentric nature of both architect work, such as the Noble house and Volsky house, which both have surprising and unexpected building geometry.



His Gaudi comparisons can be seen in his use of organic items as inspiration, such as the Boulder Eye Clinic which functions and is organized in a way similar to that of an eye. He also designed buildings in other styles, such as the Raze House in Denver which is Brutalist.

Organic architecture is best known for nature-inspired forms, and harmonious integrated connection to the site. Haertling's approach, however, was a little different. His buildings were in stark contrast to their sites, often overhanging a hillside with dramatic geometric or organic forms. The harmony he created was not due to building fitting in their sites perfectly but highlighting the differences so that the natural landscape and architecture would have more attention drawn to each.

One of Haertling's most notable buildings, the Brenton House, was featured in the 1978 Woody Allen film, *Sleeper*. This building, also known as the Mushroom house, is a great example of Haertling's out of the box designs. The inspiration for the unusual form of the home is said to come from his time in the Navy chipping clusters of barnacles off the hull of ships. The home also featured new building technology by forming the "barnacles" from Polyurethane foam and rebar. The design took two years to perfect and features five different barnacle shapes which captures views surrounding the site.

Haertling died in 1984 at the age of 55. He left behind a legacy of important modernist works scattered throughout Boulder, which have accumulated many awards and have been published nationally and internationally. The Charles A. Haertling Foundation was established in 1984 with the goal to preserve Haertling's work. The Charles A. Haertling Scholarship is awarded to a University of Colorado Boulder Environmental design student yearly.



*Charles Haertling in the Volsky House
Photo Source: Boulder Public Library
Carnegie Library for Local History*

Credited Buildings (partial list)

Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
Wheat House	Boulder		1958	
Noble House (with Tician Papachristou)	650 Pennsylvania Avenue, Boulder	5BL.8269	1958	
White House (with Tician Papachristou)	630 Pennsylvania Avenue, Boulder		1958	



Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
Knudsen House	420 Christmas Tree Drive, Boulder	5BL.8250	1960	
Krueger House	Boulder, CO		1961	
Willard House	Boulder, CO		1961	City of Boulder Structure of Merit
Quaker Meeting House	1825 Upland Avenue, Boulder		1961	
Our Savior Parish Center	Denver, CO		1961	
J.R. Knitting Mill	Boulder, CO		1963	
Warburton House	Gold Hill, CO		1963	
St. Stephens Church	Northglenn, CO	5AM.3862	1964	National Register of Historic Places
Volsky House	711 Willowbrook Road, Boulder	5BL.8275	1964	
Fredrick House	Lakewood, CO		1964	
Triframe Modular	Denver, CO Cleveland, OH Albuquerque, NM		1965	
Frederick House	Denver, CO		1965	
Albersheim House	Boulder, CO		1965	
Moment House	Boulder, CO		1966	
Fahrenkrog House	Snowmass, CO		1966	Unbuilt
Dammann House I	Boulder, CO		1966	
McConnell House	Boulder, CO		1967	
Conlin House	Boulder, CO		1967	
Caldwell House	Boulder, CO		1968	
Smith House	Snowmass, CO		1968	
Faye-Peterson House	Littleton, CO		1968	
Wilson-Haertling House	2401 Broadway, Boulder, CO		1968	City of Boulder Historic Landmark
Boulder Valley Eye Clinic	Boulder, CO	5BL.8246	1969	City of Boulder Structure of Merritt
Brenton House	3752 Wonderland Hill Drive, Boulder	5BL.8280	1969	City of Boulder Structure of Merritt
Kahn House	Boulder, CO		1970	City of Boulder Structure of Merritt
Steward House	Boulder, CO		1970	
Evergreen Apartments	Boulder, CO		1970	
Grace Lutheran Church remodel	Boulder, CO		1970	
Davis House	Boulder, CO		1970	
Razee House	Denver, CO		1970	
Gill House	Boulder, CO		1970	



Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
Jourgensen House	780 Flagstaff Road, Boulder, CO	5BL.8260	1971	
Barrett House	Boulder, CO		1971	
Stead House	Boulder, CO		1971	
Solacrest Condominiums	Vail, CO		1971	
Matheson House	Boulder, CO		1971	Destroyed in fire
Wilson House – Given Residence (with Tician Papachristou)	4247 Prado Drive, Eldorado Springs	5BL.11183	1971	
Seminar Center	Boulder, CO		1971	
Tambor Guest House	Tambor, Costa Rica		1973	Unbuilt
Rink Office Remodel	Boulder, CO		1974	
Dammann House II	Boulder, CO		1974	
Goodman House	Telluride, CO		1975	
Ford House	Boulder, CO		1975	
Gosko House	Snowmass, CO		1975	
Baumgartner House	Brighton, CO		1975	
Johnson House	Boulder, CO		1976	
Riverside Building	Boulder, CO		1976	
Roitz House	Boulder, CO		1978	City of Boulder Historic Landmark
Leaneagh House	Boulder, CO		1980	
Fleck House	Golden, CO		1981	
Chart House Restaurant	Mamaroneck, NY		1982	Unbuilt
Mountain Shadows Montessori School	Boulder, CO		1983	Unbuilt
Cunningham Addition	Boulder, CO		1983	

*Completion date is stated if known. Plan, building permit, or assessor date is shown if completion date is unknown.

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