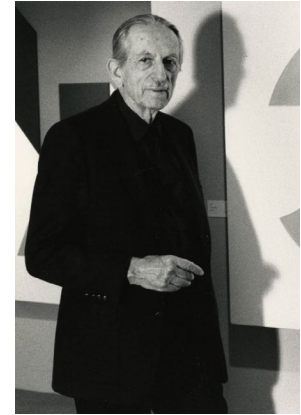




**Architect:** Richard Crowther  
**Birth/Death Dates:** 1910-2006  
**Practice Dates:** 1952 - 1985  
**Firms:**



Researched compiled by Grace Anolin, UCD student, 2022

## Biographical Information

Richard Crowther was an artist, author, and pioneer of solar architecture. Born in New Jersey, he received his M.A. in Architecture from Newark School of the Fine Industrial Arts. After a brief time working in advertising, he went on to have a prolific design career, with projects in New York, California, Wyoming, Utah, Nebraska, New Mexico, Minnesota, and Colorado.

Crowther's early career began in neon lighting. His many neon projects included designs for Lakeside Amusement Park, as well as the signage for many restaurants and stores throughout Denver. Neon work was an early example of an obsession with light that would become a defining attribute of his design philosophy. He would go on to include skylights in nearly all of his projects. In 1972, he invented the "Crowther Skyshaft," which let in daylight through the ceiling while minimizing the loss of heat associated with traditional windows and skylights.



Figure 1: Crowther's 1952 Design Center

Light also played an important role in the designs he did for department stores. For the Komac paint store at the original Cherry Creek Shopping Center, for example, Crowther designed a custom lighting system with multiple settings; at the press of a button, Komac employees could show their customers what their paint would look like under different light. This passion and interactivity with light would inspire the 1952 "Design Center," where Crowther would sell his own line of lamps and store fixtures with built-in lighting elements.

Richard Crowther was married twice. First to Emma Jane Hubbard, from 1935 to 1949, and then to Pearl Marie Tesch in 1950. The homes he built for Pearl and himself were arguably his most important works. Four in total, these "Solar Residences" were more than just places to live; they were experiments in energy conservation. With each new house Crowther designed, he tested the limits of creating comfortable living spaces that relied as little as



Figure 2: Crowther's 1979 Solar Residence was demolished after an unsuccessful local landmarking attempt in 2023

possible on fossil fuels. Unique elements of these homes included the use of periwinkle instead of grass lawn, the exclusion of fireplaces in the interest of cleaner air, and Crowther's original murals.

Crowther lived to be 96. He published ten books during his lifetime, on subjects ranging from ecologic design to feminism and personal health. His work in solar architecture earned him international renown. The Western History and Genealogy Collection at the Denver Public Library is home to

his architectural records, as well as many prints of his artwork.

### Credited Buildings (partial list)

Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
Retail Showroom	115 Madison Street Denver		1985	
Barker Residence	6721 Simms Street Jefferson County		1976	
Berry's Restaurant	Wadsworth Blvd Arvada		c.1956	
Boise Cascade House	Roxborough Park		1979	
Brooks Residence	33254 Bergen Mtn. Rd.		1977	Extant
Center State Bank	Cherry Creek North			Extant
Chaves Residence	Utica Street		1980	
Solar Office Building	3201 East 1st Ave		c.1977	
Cohen Residence	100 S Eudora Street		1955	Extant
Cooper Cinerama Theater	Colorado Blvd		1960	Demolished
Solar Residence	580 Humboldt Street		1952	Extant
Solar Residence	2735 East 7th Ave		1968	Extant
Solar Residence	500 Cook Street		c.1971	Extant
Solar Residence	401 Madison Street		1979	Demolished
Detrick Residence	32651 Meadow Mtn. Road		1975	Extant
Franklin Residence	6454 Larimer County Rd.		1980	



Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
Friedman Residence	180 S. Dahlia		c.1950	Extant
Golding Residence	18852 East Long Ave.		1980	Extant
Gregory Residence	6325 Ridgewood Dr.		1978	Extant
Hirschfeld Duplex	300 Monroe St.		1967	Demolished
Hotsy Corporation Offices	21 Inverness Way		1980	Extant
Lipp Residence	250 S. Fairfax St.		1955	Extant
Maruyama Residence	2925 Basingdale Rd.		1988	Extant
McCourt Residence	2125 S. Stonecrop Way		1983	Extant
Neufeld Residence	40 S. Bellaire St		1955	Extant
Pickett Residence	Evergreen		1977	
Riviera Motel	9100 East Colfax			Extant
Shesol Residence	18158 East Long Ave		1985	Extant
Smock Residence	Gunnison		1975	
Watts Residence	Crawford Gulch		1975	
CSU Solar Research Facility	Fort Collins		1973	
Design Center	299 Fillmore Street		1952	

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

### Information Sources

Richard Crowther Architectural Records, 1930-2002. [articles on ecological housing written by Crowther; descriptions of residential projects; photographs of commercial and residential projects; architectural plans include preliminary designs, working drawings and construction plans for commercial and residential projects; works of art.] Western History and Genealogy Collection, Denver Public Library (C MSS WH1504).

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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