

FLORIDA BUILDINGS I LOVE

No. 85: Elling Eide Center near Sarasota



Harold Bubil
Sarasota Herald-Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Elling Eide Center, a private re-search archive and preserve, sits on 70 acres facing Little Sarasota Bay that has been owned by the Eide family since the 1930s.

Located near U.S. 41, Palmer Ranch and several shopping centers between Sarasota and Venice, it was long sought by developers. Elling Eide resisted those efforts; he also had a big battle with Sa-rasota County over zoning, and even ran unsuccessfully for a County Commis-sion seat.

A noted Sinologist who died in 2012, Eide amassed what is believed to be the largest archive of ancient Chinese liter-ature in the country, as well as an im-pressive collection of Chinese art and sculpture. But it was scattered in eight old buildings on the 70 acres until archi-vist Cindy Peterson started to catalog and curate it in 2008.

Years before that, Eide starting talk-ing to architect Guy Peterson, Cindy's husband, about designing a building to



The Elling Eide Center is a 17,000-square-foot building that houses the Eide Asian and American art collection, archives and the Elling O. Eide Library. It was designed by Guy Peterson, FAIA. THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE FILE

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The Elling Eide Center in Sarasota County is a 17,000-square-foot research center and archive. It houses the large archive of art and ancient Chinese literature collected by Eide, who died in 2012. HAROLD BUBIL MEDIA



This Persian tapestry is installed in the ceiling of the dining room in the Eide Center, in keeping with Elling Eide's wishes. HAROLD BUBIL





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The Eide Center's rooftop overlooks the Intracoastal Waterway and Siesta Key.
THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE FILE

Bubil

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properly store and display the collection that would also serve as his residence.

Eide did not live to see his dream come true, but he doubtless would be happy with the structure that was built by Guy Peterson, interior designer David Lowe (using mostly Herman Miller and Knoll furnishings) and landscape architect Michael Gilkey.

The three-story, 17,000-square-foot building houses the Eide Asian and American art collection, archives and the Elling O. Eide Library.

The archive “includes an important collection of rare books and maps,” said Cindy Peterson. “The library’s collection provides researchers and students from around the world the opportunity to explore Chinese culture, history and art.”

Eide was from a family of doctors who did well investing in real estate in south Sarasota nearly a century ago. Upon his death in 2012, the estate and its collections passed to the Elling Eide Foundation, which continued work on the house. As it would no longer be a residence, Guy Peterson adapted it to become a commercial-grade structure. Funding was provided by Eide's sale of some of his adjoining property.

The modernist building, elevated above the landscape, is notable for its use of black corrugated metal siding, which will require little maintenance. “The detailing – the corners, the channels – are something we spent a lot of time on,” said Peterson.

“Florida Buildings I Love” is Harold Bubil’s homage to the Sunshine State’s built environment. This article originally ran on July 21, 2018.



ABOVE: Architect Guy Peterson designed the Elling O. Eide Center in keeping with the modernist design language that has been a hallmark of his career. HAROLD BUBIL

LEFT: The Eide Library's Rare Book Room. In this room and the rest of the library, a fire-suppression system uses inert gas, not wet sprinklers, to suffocate flames. THOMAS BENDER/HERALD-TRIBUNE FILE

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