

Voices

Weekend Tourist

By Linda Koutsky



Mid-century mod right on Franklin

A friend and I were going to meet for lunch last week somewhere between Lake Street and Northeast Minneapolis. It had to be quick, affordable, and have easy parking. And of course it wouldn't hurt if it was an adventure too!

She said: "Have you ever been to the Franklin Terrace?" I had just driven by there the other day, and the rest of my life too, but no, I'd never actually been there. "Terrific! Let's go."

You've probably seen it on the downtown side of Franklin near Pillsbury. It's set back from the street and up a level. Overlooking Pillsbury Avenue South is a multi-colored stone and wood pergola patio area. Nice! When can we sit outside?! A six-story tower toward the back rises in red brick and a steel and glass International Style pattern. Behind the tower is a free parking lot (just be sure to get the code before you leave).

Many faith-based organizations have offices here at the Minnesota Church Center. It's also

a central gathering place for Minnesota's faith community. Meeting rooms can be reserved for these organizations and yours too. Folding dividers allow for many configurations. (Call 612-870-3600 for room rental.)

Walking into the lobby is like walking into a period room at the MIA. The materials exude mid-century modern and they haven't been touched. What a treasure to see. If you're already in despair over Mad Men's last season, get over here and immerse yourself in the kind of environment that show's location scouts somehow missed. MCM interiors are usually all about the materials. This one has many: semi rough-cut red and grey St. Cloud granite walls, smooth slate floors, walls of honey-colored vertical wood slats, groovy overhead lighting, graphically arranged plants. Plus, this place is as neat as a pin! It's a church building after all. I could have taken a t-square to lobby chair layout: arms just barely touching, perfect 90-degree corners. Kind of like Downton Abbey. My friend wanted to put in a bunch of cubicles and rent space from them — it's that nice.

While it's very popular right now, mid-century modern design and architecture still eludes many critics. We've torn down too many of these treasures in Minneapolis. This 1963 building was designed by local firm Armstrong, Schlichting, Torseth & Skold. It's not even included in the "American Institute of Architects Guide to Twin Cities Architecture." Though they've had a few partner changes over the years, and are now called ATS&R, the firm recently celebrated 70 years in business.



No library card needed to see this museum-worthy art full of Minnesota author quotes. Photo by Linda Koutsky

MINNESOTA CHURCH CENTER

Location: 122 W. Franklin Ave.

Franklin Café hours: Monday–Friday, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Building Hours: 8 a.m.–9 p.m. Monday; 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Tuesday; 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Wednesday; 8 a.m.–9 p.m. Thursday; 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Friday

LUNCH TIP

Scandinavian Lutherans aren't known for their spicy food but the chef has been turning up the Cajun heat slowly here over the years.

Plus, they have a really good lunch! Two sisters run the Franklin Terrace Café — one is the cook the other the pastry chef. Do they

ever work well together! The little cafeteria line is stocked with one of the freshest salad bars in town. And it includes herring!! Sandwiches are made to order and there are a couple kinds of homemade soup daily. Bars, pies, and brownies my friend said were the best she ever had, round out lunch. Take your tray to the room overlooking Franklin or outside when the weather gets nicer. The café also provides high quality catering for meetings or other needs.

Before FaceTime, there was face time.

International Pop Walker Art Center



Yoko Tadanori: Still from Kiss Kiss Kiss Kiss Kiss 1964. Courtesy the artist and NANZUKA Gallery, Tokyo

Now on view walkerart.org

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