

Zonta PEEK House Article
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Walker Guest House to be featured on Zonta's "PEEK at the Unique" tour

A historic 1950's Sanibel beach house, owned by Mrs. Elaine Walker and designed by renowned architect Paul Rudolph, will be one of the island homes featured on this year's PEEK house tour. The sponsor for this PEEK home is Fresh Express, the leading provider of "ready-to-eat," bagged salads found in grocery stores nationwide.

Scheduled for Saturday, March 1, the tour offers PEEKers an opportunity to view four of the islands most unusual homes and at the same time to help improve the lives of women. Monies raised by the Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva are granted to local and international organizations to advance the status of women and girls.

The unique Walker guest house is often described as the "Cannonball House" because of the large, weighty red balls that help to pull up and anchor the walls. When the "flats" or walls are open, visitors feel as though they are outdoors. Weather permitting, the walls will be entirely open for the PEEK tour. Rudolph not only designed this house, but also the initial chairs and furniture which were two tones of grey and black. Originally, the floor was linoleum and the ceilings were covered in grass cloth.

Known for his cubist building designs and highly complex floor plans, Rudolph began his career in 1947 in Sarasota where a number of homes there and on Siesta Key are examples of his style. He became the dean of the Yale School of Architecture in 1958 where he designed what is considered his most famous work -- the Yale Art and Architecture building.

Although the Walker guest house is rarely used in order to maintain the integrity of the interior, Mrs. Walker graciously offered it for the PEEK tour. Toni Farrell, an architect in Ft Myers who studied at the Sarasota School of Architecture, will be the speaker for this famous house which has been featured in many magazine and newspaper articles. Rudolph is considered one of the major architects of the facility now known as the Sarasota School of Architecture.

The Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva is a service organization of professional women working together to provide hands-on assistance, advocacy and funds to strengthen women's lives on the islands, in Lee County and around the world through Zonta International. Additional information about Zonta is available at www.zontasancap.com. Tickets for "A PEEK at the Unique" are available by calling 395-4637.

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Photo Caption: The Walker Guest House is tucked into a lush Sanibel setting just steps from the beach.



Photo Caption: Weighty red balls hold the “flats” or walls up making nature an integral part of the Walker guest house experience.



Photo Caption: Mrs. Walker (above), in the kitchen of her guest house which was built in the early 1950s. When the walls are open, the world outside becomes part of the house.



Photo Caption: Often referred to as the “Cannonball House,” the Walker guest house was designed by Paul Rudolph with walls that open the interior to nature by a series of pulleys and weights in the form of large red balls.