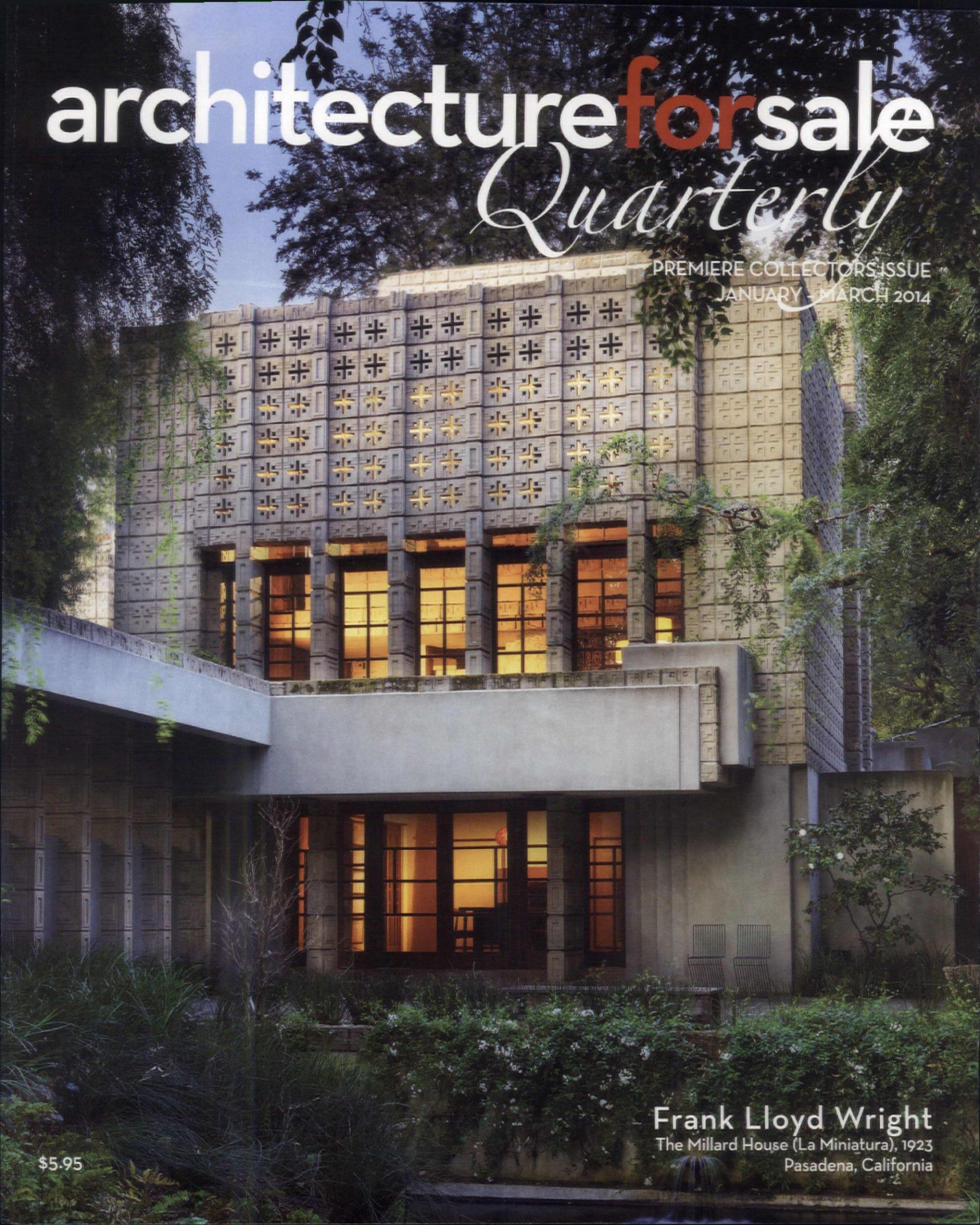


# architecture **for** sale

## *Quarterly*

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JANUARY - MARCH 2014



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**Frank Lloyd Wright**  
The Millard House (La Miniatura), 1923  
Pasadena, California



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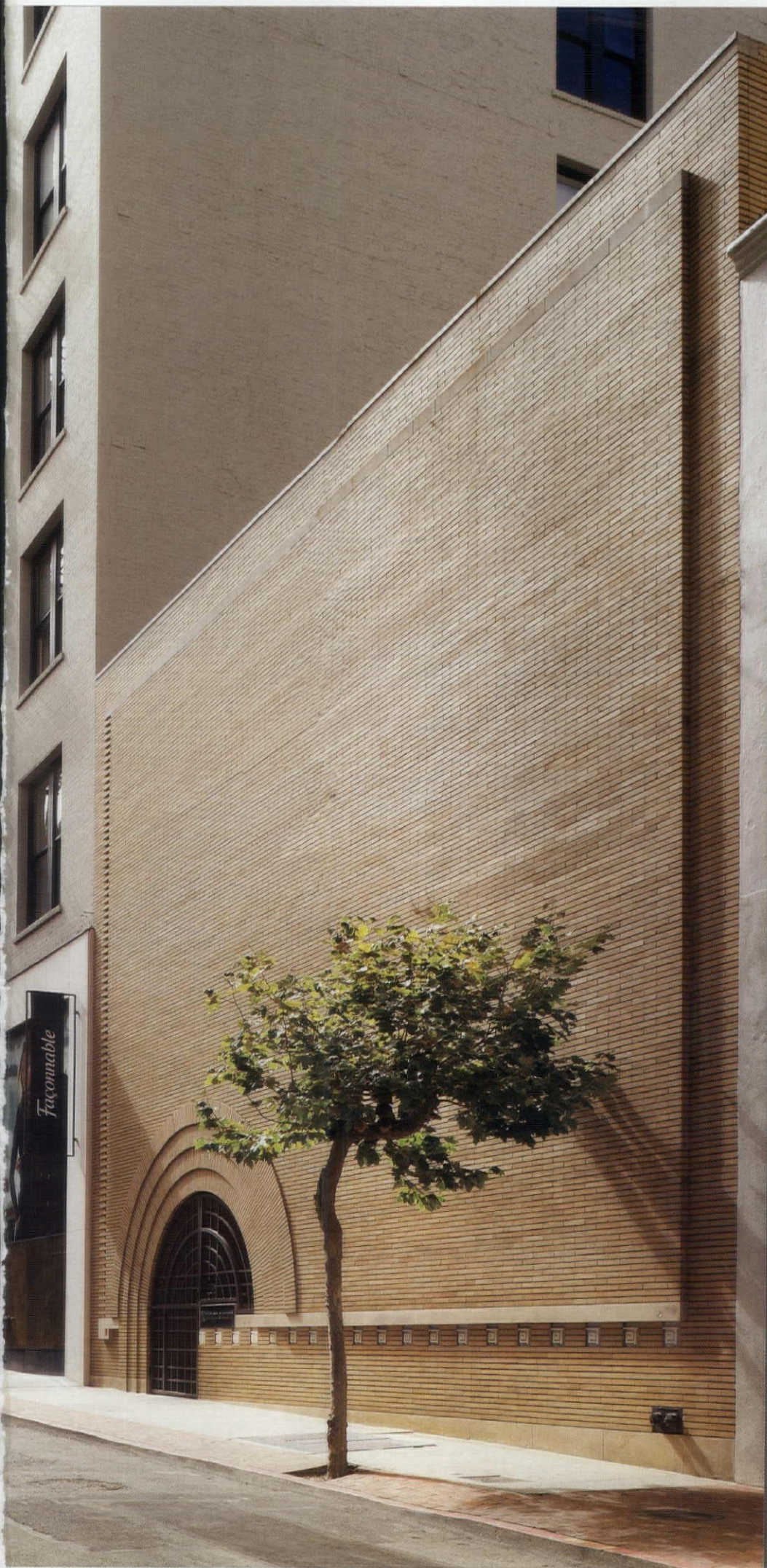
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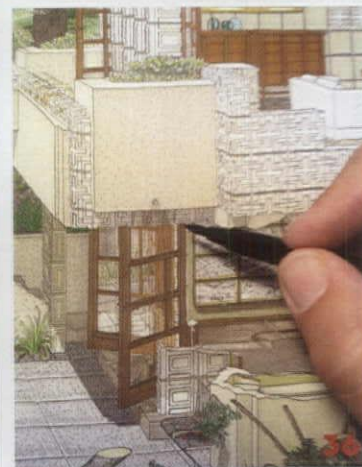
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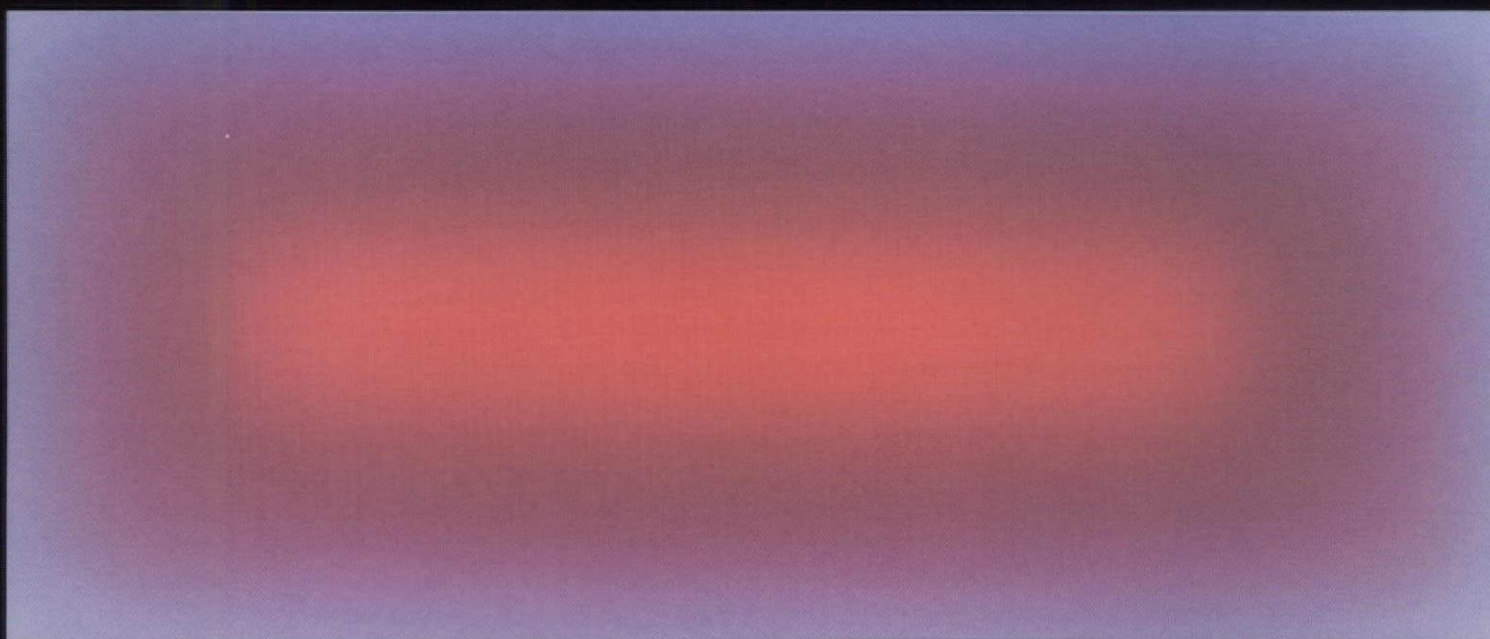
A selection of architecturally significant properties for sale around the world.





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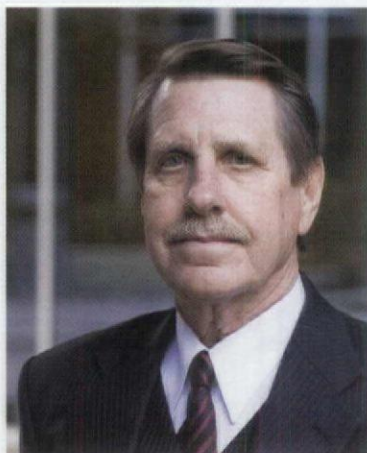


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## EDITOR'S NOTE

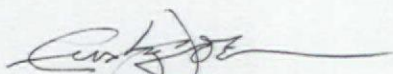
# A MARKETPLACE FOR ARCHITECTURE

Why a marketplace for architecture? To quote none other than Winston Churchill: "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."

And they not only shape us as individuals, but as a society as well. In the depths of the Great Depression William Lamb's 102-story skyscraper, the Empire State Building, became an instant American cultural icon bolstering national pride, and a sense of possibility and faith in an economic system whose foundations were foundering. The dignified beauty of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, a merging of designs by Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer built in the late 1940s, still symbolizes our hope for a more harmonious world. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Monsanto's efficient little House of the Future in Disneyland instilled in millions of young children (myself included) and adults as well, the promise of modern living that was well within reach. Great and even minor architecture imparts positive gifts to individuals and society beyond economic measure. I think these gifts need to be recognized and celebrated.

There are also several thousand houses and residences around the world – such as the Millard House in Pasadena, California, featured here in this premiere issue of *ArchitectureForSale Quarterly*, – that are iconic, inspirational, and function on the same level as high art. Yet, these priceless treasures are not valued equally with other art forms. All of the Frank Lloyd Wright houses on the market today could be purchased for the price of one Mark Rothko painting – with dollars to spare! And I believe this is an issue worth exploring and addressing.

Architecture is not just about ego, making a statement, and money. True, there is some of that. But more importantly, every true work of architecture offers a singular lifestyle that is of immeasurable benefit to the happiness and, as Richard Neutra would argue, the health and sanity of its occupants. In the vast ocean of Real Estate Hype, where so many ordinary tract houses are considered "stunning," and builders' speculative McMansions are called "dreamhouses," a real marketplace for architecture is not only deserving, but long overdue. Here, homes of architectural merit great and small, from priceless legacy treasures to modest Mies condominiums will be celebrated. Great residences and building's stories will be told, market data will be shared. Buyers, sellers and their agents will have an engaging and convenient place to find and showcase architecture. Your participation is invited.

  
Crosby Doe



## CONTRIBUTORS

### HUNTER D. PHILP

Hunter Drohojowska-Philp is author of a number of books including two on architectural photography, *Modernism Rediscovered: Julius Shulman and Pedro Guerrero*. Architecture was featured as well in her 2011 book, *Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s*. She is an art critic for KCRW radio, a contributor to Artnews and the *Los Angeles Times*, and the California curator for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art.



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Nicholas Olsberg was Chief Curator and then Director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, from its opening in 1989 to 2004. He has published, lectured and curated exhibitions on a wide range of architectural figures and topics including major studies of Arthur Erickson, Frank Lloyd Wright, Carlo Scarpa, John Lautner, Cliff May, and the delineator Carlos Diniz; a recent series of magazine portfolios on architectural drawings; and lectures and workshops on the urban character and forms of Los Angeles.



### KURT WAHLNER

Los Angeles native Kurt Wahlner has made drawings of architecture for the past six years. Completely self-taught, his drawings have to be seen in person to be believed. But you can catch a glimpse online at [wahlner.com](http://wahlner.com).



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*Art+Architecture,  
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# Marmol Radziner & James Turrell

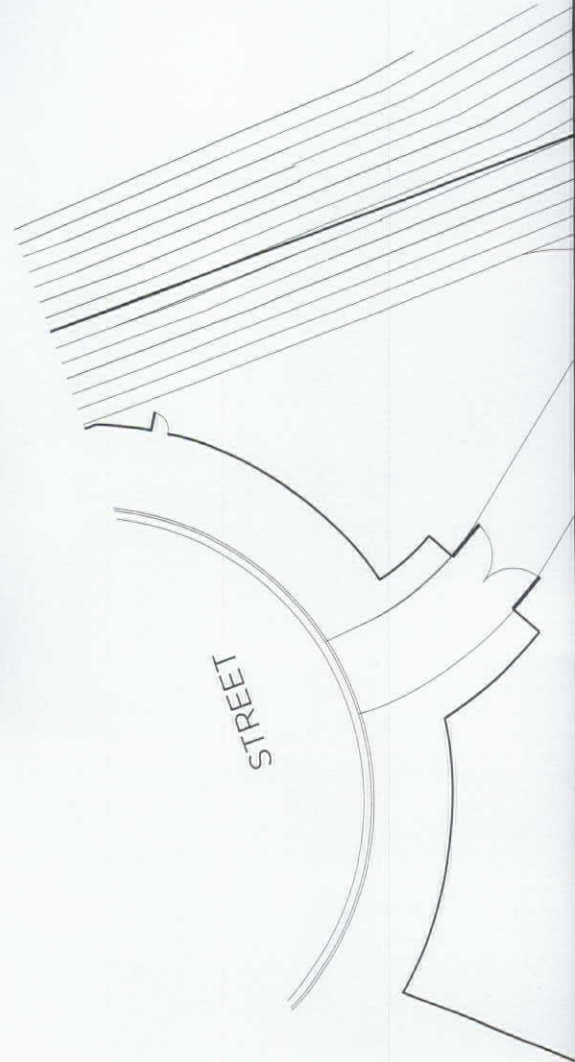
## ARROWHEAD



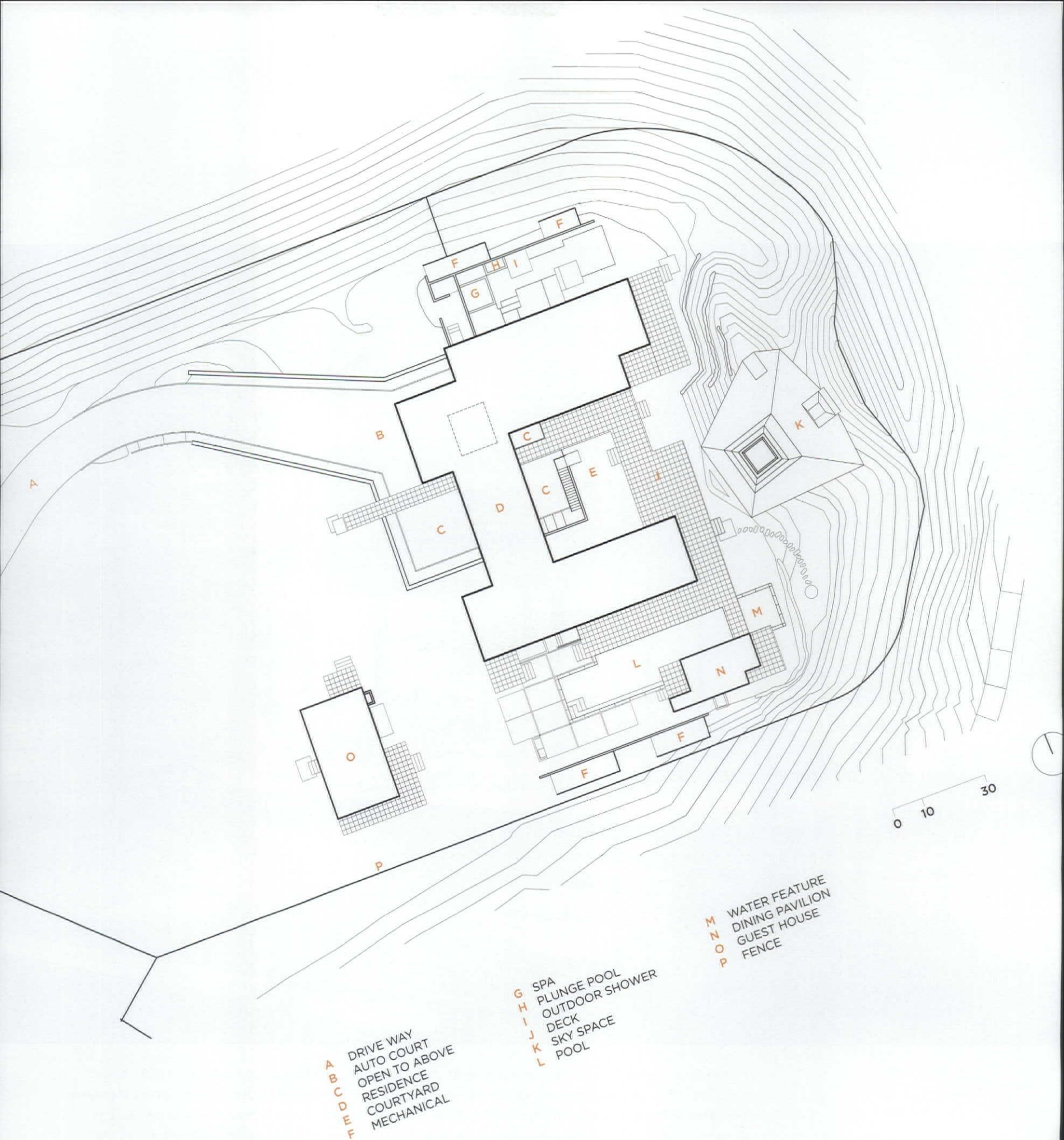
### Nicholas Olsberg looks at the Murren Residence, a pioneering model for de-suburbanization in Las Vegas

Arrowhead is a luxury estate with a radical difference. It lies on the rugged edge of a ridge west of Las Vegas, dramatic views of the mountains behind it and a panoramic vista of the ever-changing city before it. It was developed as a home for the family of Jim Murren, CEO of MGM Resorts, and it emerged alongside the great adventure in environmental, aesthetic and urban thinking that Murren brought to the conception of MGM's 'City Center.' City Center is the first authentically metropolitan complex on the Las Vegas Strip, and by far its most serious effort at introducing innovative and consistent architectural thinking into that chaos of pastiche, fancy, and banality. In the same way, Arrowhead stands as the prototype for a new type of suburban dwelling that lies more lightly on the land, takes much less from it, and – like a model city as much as a standard residence – lays itself out on the site as a set of volumes of different scale and uses, with different sensibilities, linked and separated by a pattern of open spaces and walkways, but united around a consistent architectural language.

The Murrens came to this approach slowly, starting with design studies for a modern variant of the hacienda, but gradually coming to recognize that an environmentally responsive strategy with a more open relationship between the structure and terrain and a much lighter impact on the land and its resources could prove even more satisfying. Partly as a result of his association with the artist James Turrell, Jim Murren became familiar with Marmol Radziner's ventures into forging desert dwellings from a steel-based modular system of construction, and began to work with them on a plan that would match that system to the needs and sensibilities of a lively small family. What emerged above the rocky ledge in The Ridges Estates was a set of pavilions, some connecting and some standing free, and all linked by terraces that flow seamlessly between them, ending with a massively impressive sky-space by Turrell, perhaps his most important private commission, that closes at the edge of the site the dialogue between motion and meditation, serenity and dynamism, that marks the whole. It is an astonishingly effective model for inhabiting a dry hot climate and a rugged landscape, and one that could be modified to many different scales and needs.







## SITE PLAN

The architects' site plan shows how extensive is the open connective tissue in the complex, and how the use of water features and voids builds up an internal landscape for the house. The effect is not only satisfying aesthetically and socially, but is extraordinarily efficient in maximizing the use of natural and shading elements – breezes, canopies and vegetation – to cool the entire environment.





Architects and clients conceived of the house not as a single solid form but as a dynamic plan, much like a small city, in which “the connective tissue is as important as enclosed volumes,” and where the same overall experience of space, structure and vista would apply wherever one moved. The goal was to lend to every moment a visible sense of community with each other and of conversation with nature, so that family, visitors and friends would always “feel part of a bigger organism even in the most private space.” To achieve that, spaces for different functions were distributed, like a well-planned city, into broad zones of activity rather than closed rooms, and allowed to flow into one another both visually and physically. To make that effect comfortable, transitions between private and public zones, closed and open spaces would be gently modulated, and a common language of materials, colors, details and structure would be used for all.









Conventional strategies for providing shelter in a hot desert setting involve high tiled roofs, dense walls, opaque materials, deep-set openings, heavily covered porches, and orientations that turn away from the sun. At its best – in the traditions of the Pueblo people, the Arab world, or the Mexico of Luis Barragan – there can be something seductive and romantic about the resulting contrast between open landscapes and closed courtyards, dark porches and vivid patios, or about the sympathies that emerge between the earthen palettes of the building and the colors of the ground around it. But it is an approach that carries enormous prices. First, the environmental costs of undertaking such construction in modern circumstances and to current codes are massive.

Whatever the performance of the building over the years, the initial impact on energy and environment of excavation, transport of materials, and on site construction is excessive. Second if any house built along such traditional lines were to meet the complex and capacious needs of an active family in a luxury setting, it would, as Jim Murren discovered in his first design exercise, impose on a visually and ecologically sensitive landscape a massy structure that would be extraordinarily intrusive. Last, the boundaries between indoors and out, the confines of the room and the openness of the world about it, become essentially sedentary – too fixed, uniform and defined to encourage the kind of flow between social and private space, inside and out, busy doings and meditative moments, that mark our lives today.



At Arrowhead, the architects confronted the first two problems by approaching construction in a different fashion, customizing to fit the terms of a luxury villa and a distinctive plan and setting the kind of industrially fabricated modular systems that have traditionally been standardized and applied to repetitive or formulaic schemes. The result is a case study in adapting efficiency of construction to a large scale and highly specific dwelling. At the same time, by burying most walled functions below ground, by distributing others into freestanding pavilions, and floating them on a single plane just above ground, and by using a building system that lets the landscape move around it, the amount of interference with the topography was dramatically reduced and the intrusion of the weight of a mansion on the emerging cityscape was avoided. As Jim Murren describes the process, it was, like the idea behind his City Center initiative that was emerging at the same time on the Strip below, a radical effort at "de-suburbanization." In these respects it stands in the line of Richard Neutra's steel house in the San Fernando Valley for Von Sternberg, the Eameses' home and studio in Pacific Palisades, or any number of other California homes of the Case Study era – like those of Craig Ellwood and Raphael Soriano – in which industrial materials and open plans were used to recalibrate the suburban landscape.



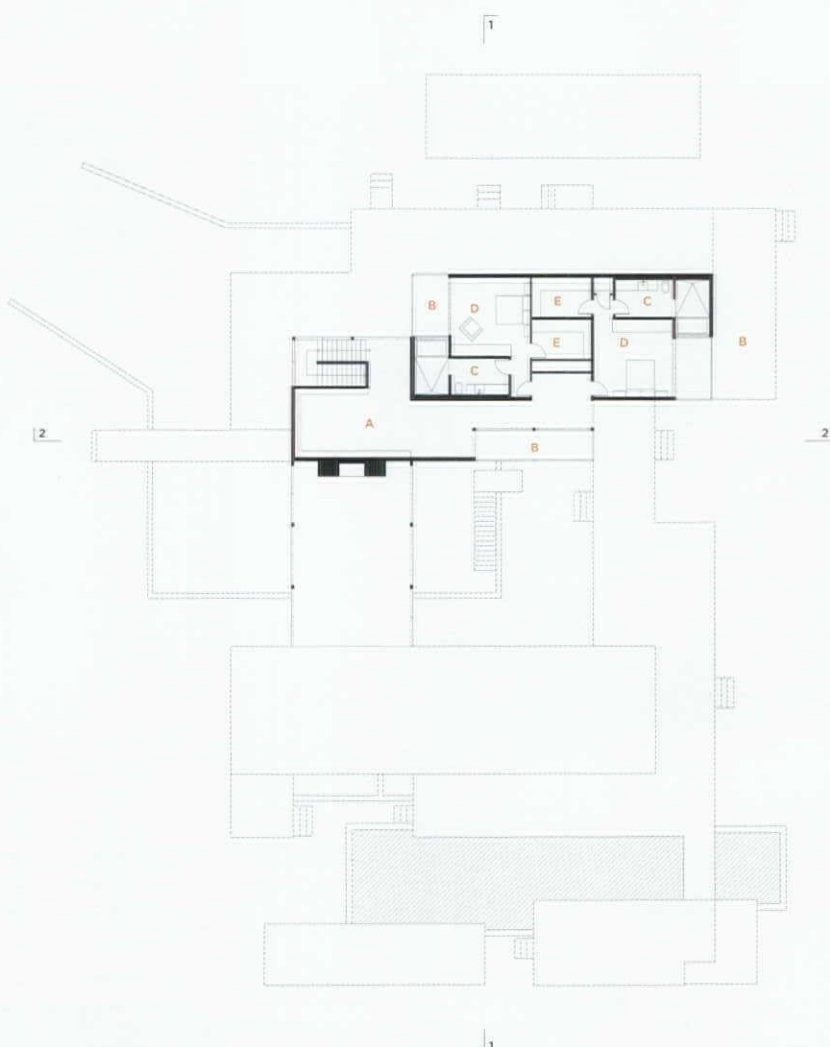




## FIRST FLOOR

- A ENTRY
- B POWDER
- C STAFF ROOM
- D LAUNDRY
- E NORTH CANOPY
- F MASTER BATH
- G MASTER CLOSET
- H MASTER BEDROOM
- I VESTIBULE
- J DECK
- K GREAT ROOM
- L LIBRARY
- M ELEVATOR
- N KITCHEN
- O FAMILY ROOM
- P POOL CANOPY
- Q POOL
- R DINING PAVILION
- S WATER FEATURE
- T OPEN TO BELOW

0 5 15



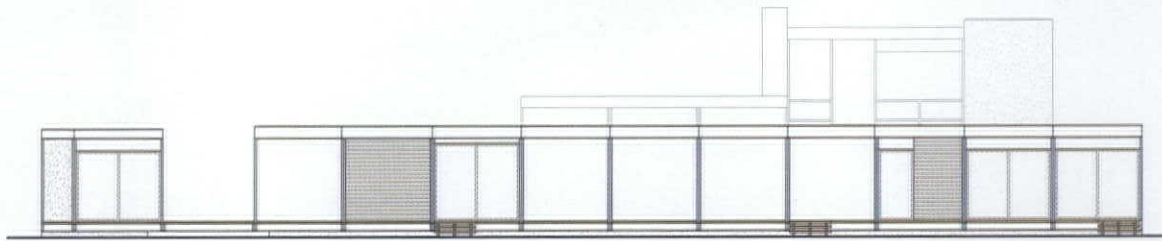
## SECOND FLOOR

- A STUDY/PLAYROOM
- B DECK
- C BATH
- D BEDROOM
- E CLOSET

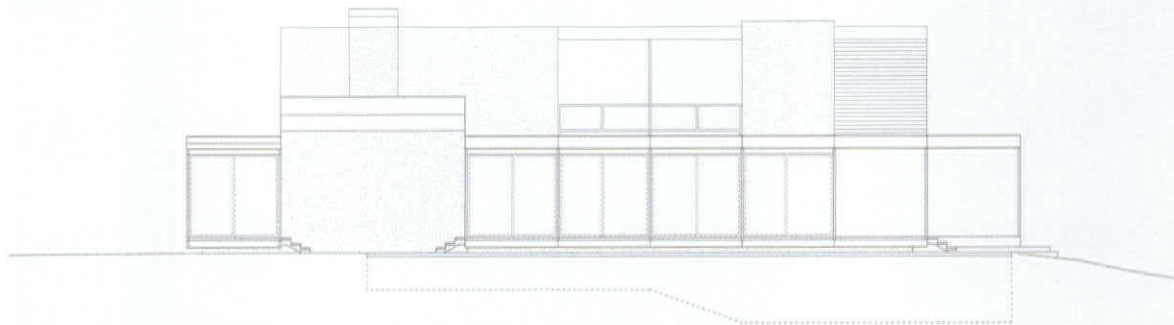
0 5 15



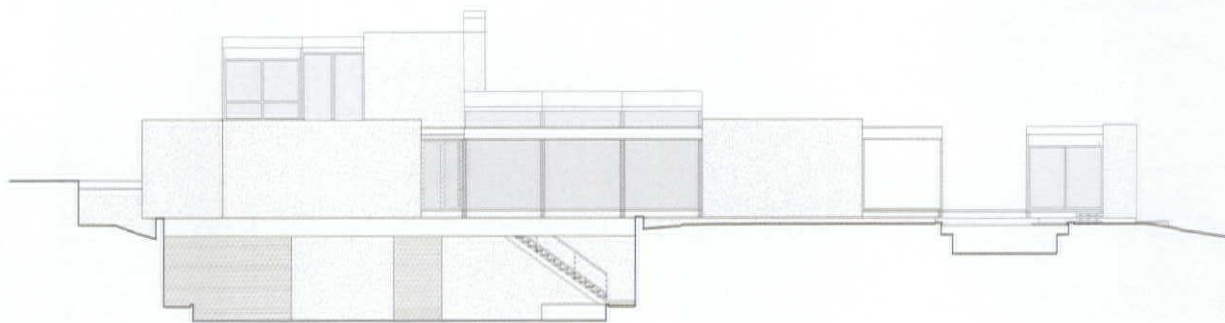
# ELEVATIONS



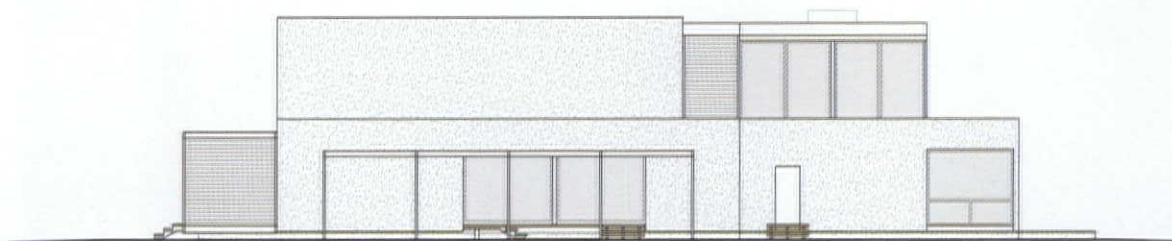
EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

0 5 15

## SECTIONS

Sections show how many of the functions that require enclosure – such as theater, gym, services, and storage – are consolidated and placed into excavated space, dramatically reducing cooling costs. Sections also make clear the light profile of the modular system, in which details and fittings are delivered installed. The effect is to eliminate most of the extraordinary waste involved with mixing, pouring and cutting construction materials on site, and drastically reduce the destructive impact of dust, traffic, and energy use associated with conventional construction techniques in a desert setting.









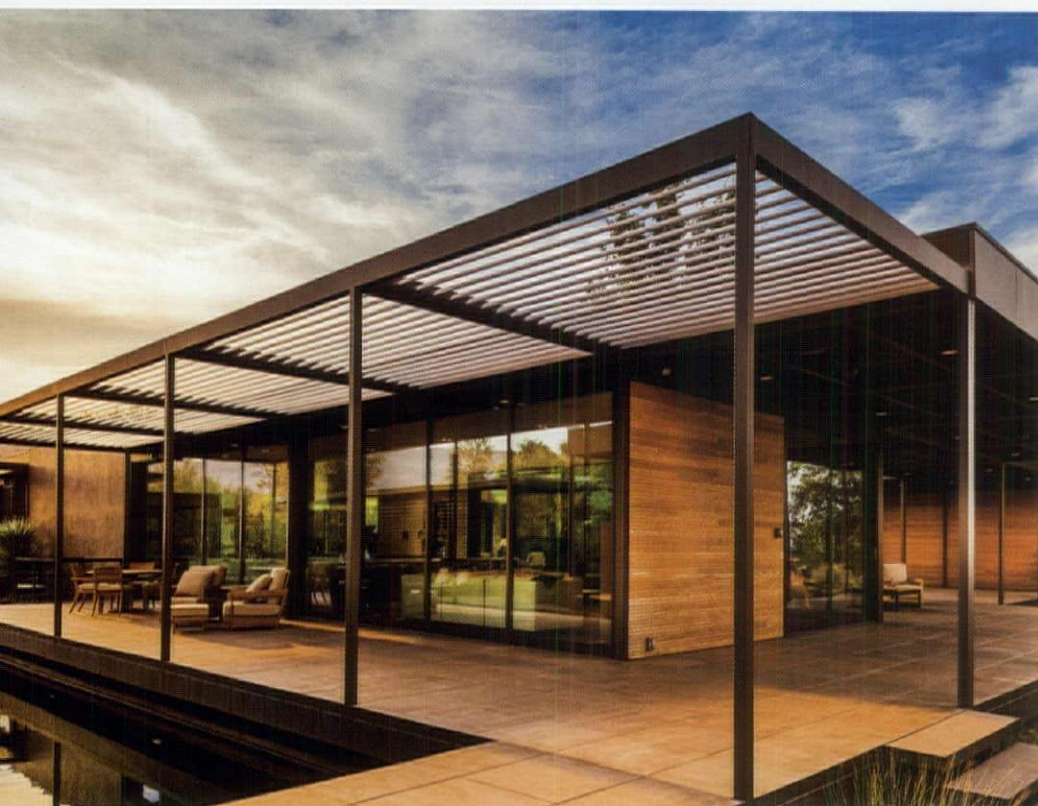
Most important perhaps is the radically different approach to shelter. Here Marmol Radziner and their clients rethink shelter not as a barrier against the rough terrain of the desert, or the intensity of its light and heat, but as the means of enjoying them. The plan liberates living from the box and its boundaries in favor of an open plan, allowing the different zones for living to find different relationships to the site and its vistas, linking them both in a seamless internal flow and by a continuous system of terraces. The roofs of the enclosures turn into wide, high canopies that stretch above these connecting outdoor rooms, and shaded glass walls slide apart to make movement between indoors and out seamless, comfortable and inviting. The key to the whole scheme lies in the use of a unified construction system, fabricated offsite and assembled with a minimum of labor and resources, huge modular panels, of steel frames. Frames vary in use from ceiling to clerestory to screen to glass or solid wall and are panelled in many different materials, with glass, metal sheets, and strips or boards of wood, fitting the orientation and function of each section. But the repeated geometries of these modules and the consistent palette of colors and surfaces bring an extraordinary coherence to the whole that turns a wandering plan into a rigorously unified spatial composition. In Jim Murren's words, "there is a discipline to the design."

That discipline – gained through the use of a variable modular system – allowed the architects to shape a building with no fixed points of view and with many different pathways. In the ever-changing conversation between light, shadow, and structure as different aspects of the compound unfold either by moving through it or by watching the movement of the sun, there is still a steady rhythm that renders all the visual incidents satisfying. As the plan shows, interruptions in the form of water features, landscaped space, drops, and voids are as essential to this idea of an unfolding pattern as the passages one moves through. The effective result – and where the Arrowhead complex really triumphs – is in the continuity it brings between people within it and all the aspects of the space around: from the surface of the earth, its native vegetation (which the gardens of the compound simply intensify rather than contradict) to the rocky undulations of the terrain as it reaches the shelf that falls so fast at the eastern edge of the site; to the worldly vista of the Las Vegas Strip aglow at night; and finally to the passage of sunlight and the movement of the desert sky as it moves toward dusk and the appearance of the moon and stars.





This relationship is captured in a more contemplative but decisive fashion in Turrell's Arrowhead sky-space, situated with deliberate abruptness just where that shelf falls away from the constructed tray on which the living compound sits. There, Turrell constructs a dense earth-toned pyramid whose form, tones, siting and textures are shaped to stand in contrast to the glass pavilions above it. Echoing the colors and geometries of ancient kivas and the stepped gradients of pyramids, its two connecting chambers sit right on the boundary between tamed and untamed landscape, surface, depth and sky; and its openings – one framing the sky overhead and the other the oblique moment where earth and space are joined – invite one to watch with stillness and wonder the same unfolding play between celestial and terrestrial light that the design of the everyday world behind it uncovers with such casual and lively grace. ■



## 7 Painted Feather – Las Vegas



Details & Information at: [ArrowheadLasVegas.com](http://ArrowheadLasVegas.com)

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Above: Carlos Diniz (1928-2001), *Monarch Bay Homes*, 1961, Kelsey & Ladd Architects, Vintage Screenprint

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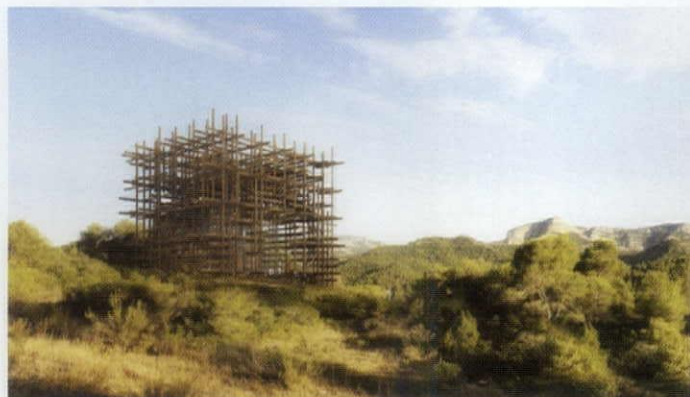
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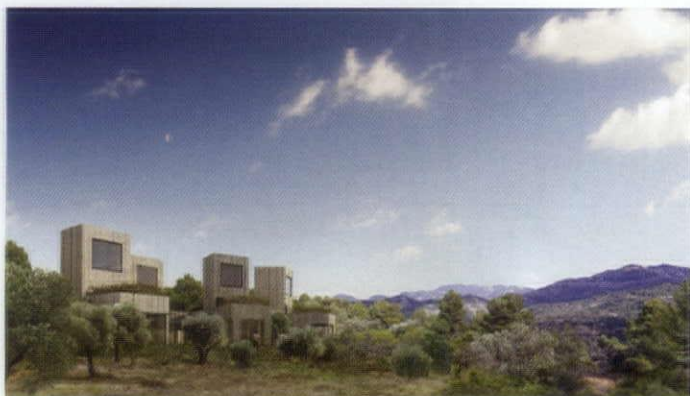
**CASA SOLO PEZO — ARCHITECTS: MAURICIO PEZO AND SOFIA VON ELLRICHSHAUSEN**



**CASA SOLO FUJIMOTO — ARCHITECT: SOU FUJIMOTO**



**CASA SOLO JOHNSTON MARKLEE — ARCHITECTS: SHARON JOHNSTON AND MARK LEE**



**CASA SOLO MOS — ARCHITECTS: MICHAEL MEREDITH AND HILARY SAMPLE**



# SOLO HOUSES – Cretas, Mararrana, Spain

## A NEW DIALOG BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND NATURE

In the still native countryside in Southern Catalonia outside of Barcelona in Spain, fresh and exciting concepts for living with nature are taking shape. Like the Houses at Sagaponack in New York, each of the proposed international vacation retreats, which range in size from 160 to 250 square meters, is designed by a different noted architect. Some of the most talented young architects from around the world have contributed their visions. Clearly, the concepts presented are as much art as architecture. Will these idealistic concepts get built? Hopefully. At a minimum the architect's ideas offer a refreshing new way of looking at the dialogue between the built and natural environment. The good news is that one of the projects, Casa Pezo, is now completed. **Keep posted at: [www.solo-houses.com](http://www.solo-houses.com)** ■



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Photography on Casa Pezo by: ©Cristobal Palma  
Synthetic images of houses by Faustino, Fujimoto, Johnson Marklee, Mos and KGDVS: ©by-encore.com





# Frank Lloyd Wright's Millard House "La Miniatura"

## *Romance Reigns Here*

By Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

In the 1920s, Frank Lloyd Wright designed four textile block houses in Los Angeles and, according to Henry Russell Hitchcock, the 1923 Millard residence is the best. Hitchcock was the preeminent architectural historian of his day and organized the landmark exhibition *Modern Architecture* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932. He placed Wright first and foremost in the exhibition and the catalogue noting that it was Wright who conceived of such modernist principles as the open plan, the flat roof, the organic relationship between building and landscape and, most important in L.A., the indoor to outdoor lifestyle. His ideas influenced countless European and American architects including his sometime associates Rudolph Schindler, Richard Neutra and John Lautner.

Wright was in the midst of another burst of exceptional creativity when he was approached about the Millard residence, also known as *La Miniatura*. In 1906, he had designed a house for rare book dealers George and Alice Millard in the Highland Park neighborhood of Chicago. They moved to South Pasadena in 1913 and, after the death of her husband, Alice Millard expanded the business to sell European antiques.<sup>1</sup>





Wright had completed the Hollyhock House in Hollywood for the oil heiress Aline Barnsdall as well as the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. Both projects employed successfully the use of patterned concrete blocks. When approached by Millard, he suggested a further evolution of his block technique. It turned out to be the most romantic of all the houses. David Gebhardt wrote, "The dwellings location, within a low ravine, enshrouded by trees, and overlooking a pond with a path of stepping stones across it, created a highly potent poetic image, similar to that of Falling Water poised over its waterfall at Bear Run, Pennsylvania. (1936)"<sup>2</sup>

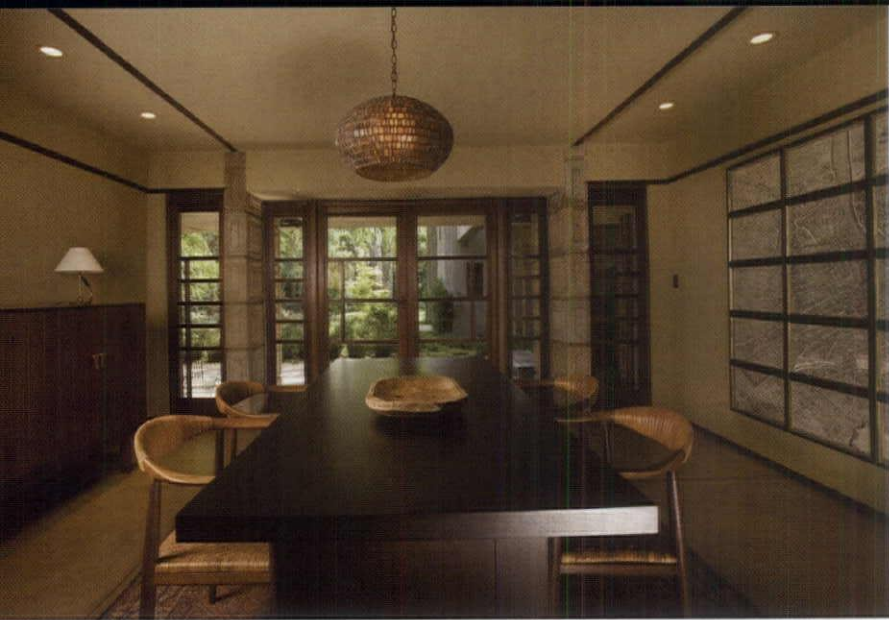
Millard was content with the concrete block if she could contribute her own taste to the house in the form of an ornate fire screen in the living room, rustic wooden doors and 18th century Delft tile in the bathrooms. Wright was so excited about his sympathetic client and the charming site that he reduced his fee to accommodate her budget. Millard had purchased the land on Prospect Crescent near many other residences designed by distinguished architects including Charles and Henry Greene, Wallace Neff and Myron Hunt. Wright positioned the house within the embrace of a natural arroyo so that the living room elevation opens onto an oval pond and lush gardens.

Though most of Wright's early buildings were oriented horizontally to relate to the horizon of the mid-west, the Millard house is distinctly vertical, with columns of block reinforcing the upward movement, in response to the shape of the ravine in which it sits.

A filtered, dappled light flows into the house through perforated block walls that act as screens as well as numerous tall windows. The pattern cut into or stamped onto the block was drawn from Pre-Columbian motifs and modernized as a cross surrounded by four holes. Wright mixed sand from the site into the cement so the building would be authentically integrated with its location.<sup>3</sup>







The three levels of the house spiral around a central chimney, a choreography that ensures one is in touch constantly with the palpable presence of nature through windows, terraces and glass doors.

From a paved courtyard, one enters at the middle level, under a bridge that connects the main building and garage, and experiences an extravagant sense of release coming into the double height living room. On one side of the room, a wall of glass doors is surmounted by a screen of perforated block that filters the verdant light coming into the room. On the opposite wall, patterned block ornaments the fireplace and façade of a balcony that conceals access to the top floor.

Redwood ceilings and paneling lend warmth to the concealed stairs and corridor leading to the master bedroom, which features high ceilings and a tall, slender window framing the view of the arroyo. Several roof terraces are meant to be used as outdoor rooms offering views of the lawns and mature trees on the property.

On the lower level, the original kitchen has been updated with contemporary appliances. It is adjacent to the dining room that opens onto a patio and garden.

A few years after its completion, Millard asked Wright to design a smaller, separate book studio and guest house adjacent to the house. The commission was given to his son Lloyd Wright who concentrated the ornamental block around doors and the windows. A sleeping porch on the mezzanine opens to the double height ceilings of the main studio. The perforated block screens light as it does in the main house. Lloyd Wright subsequently designed the landscaping for the entire property.

Wright was exceptionally pleased with La Miniatura. In his autobiography, he wrote, "The whole mass and texture of the home made the eucalyptus trees more beautiful, they in turn made the house walls more so." <sup>4</sup> ■



1. Robert L. Sweeney, *Wright in Hollywood: Visions of a New Architecture*, New York: The Architectural History Foundation and Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994, p. 28
2. David Gebhard, *The California Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1997 p. 19
3. Abby Moor, *California Textile Block*, London: PRC Publishing Ltd., 2002, p. 51
4. David G. De Long, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Designs for an American Landscape 1922-1932*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, p. 40

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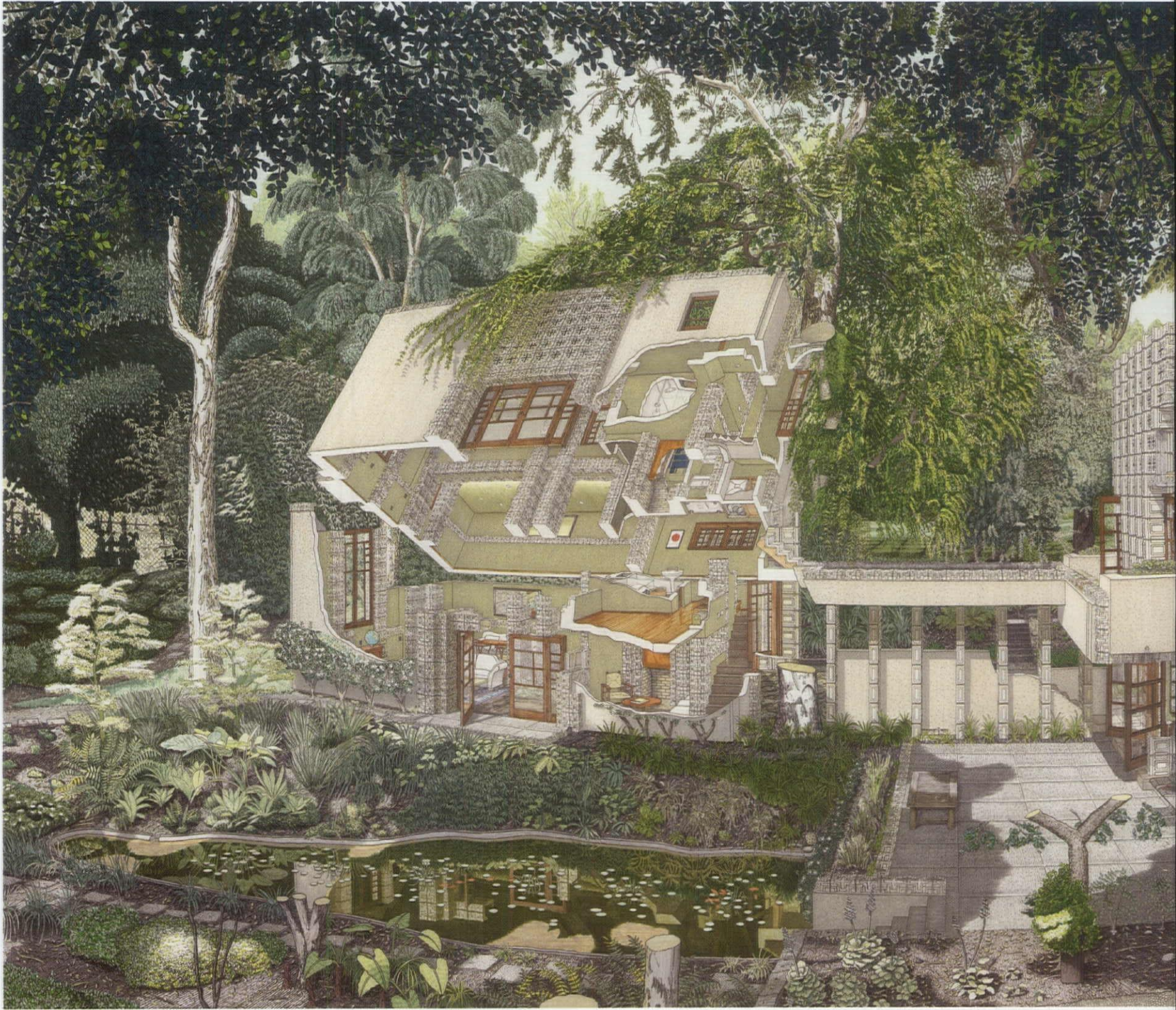
David Cressey, *Legend*, 1959, stoneware, gift of the 2012 Decorative Arts and Design Acquisition Committee (DA<sup>2</sup>), on view now at the National Art Center Tokyo in California Design, 1930–1965: "Living in a Modern Way"

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# The Millard House On The Market



Having grown up an architecture buff up in Los Angeles, the Millard House in Pasadena has always been hidden behind a screen of verdant growth and unapproachability. Consulting architecture books doesn't really reveal the flow of the space, or how the Studio connects. Photographs – for all their beauty – never quite tell me everything I want to know. Somehow, I developed this format of architectural representation which satisfies my craving to understand the design of a building more fully.

Working from pictures in books, I did produce a preliminary drawing of the Millard House in black and white, which, looking at it now, is so hilariously wrong. Whatever wasn't covered in the published photos forced me to make a guess - which usually turned out to be wrong. "Never try to outguess Mr. Wright" became my motto. To produce a drawing like this, one must visit the building in person. But how? La Miniatura is almost never opened to the public.

But when this masterpiece from Frank Lloyd Wright's "middle" period was placed on the market some time ago, I contacted the listing agent, begging for a chance to make my drawing, saying that I wanted to know more about the design of this concrete tower in a ravine. Surprisingly, the agent said "Yes."

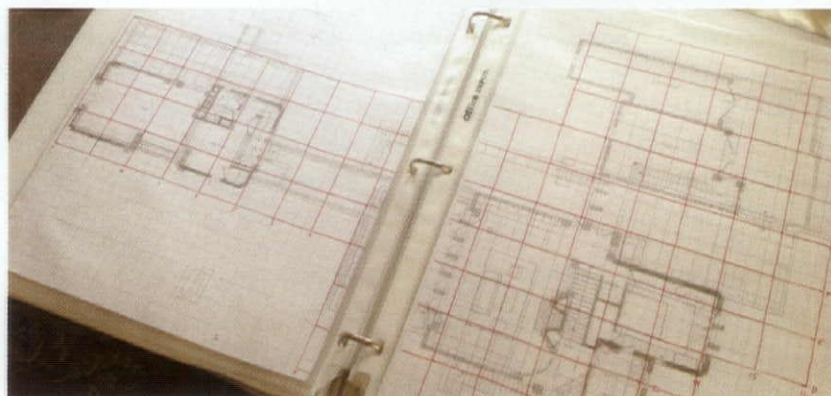


# Inspires A New Artistic Interpretation

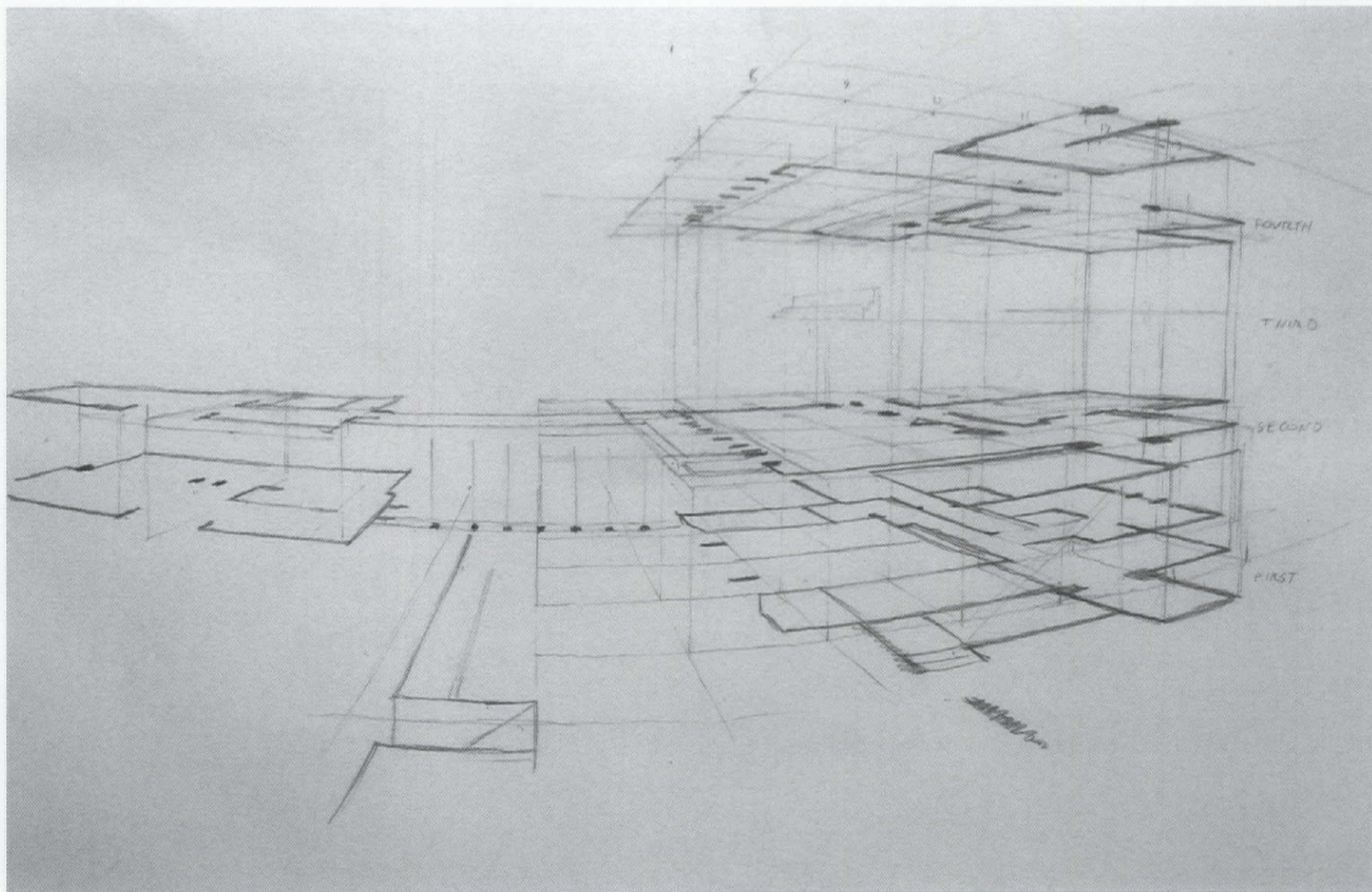


When I visit a building, I want to record everything. I can't get enough data: How is it sited? How does the sunlight strike it? How many books are in the bookcases? Are there bookcases? I am only limited by what I can observe and record. As an artist, my challenge is to try to be a step ahead of technology; to do something a computer can't. This drawing and others like it that I have completed are all done strictly freehand—I don't even use a ruler.

I have run into people who say, "Why go through all this trouble? I have a program that could scan in a building like this in 40 minutes." Sure you do.







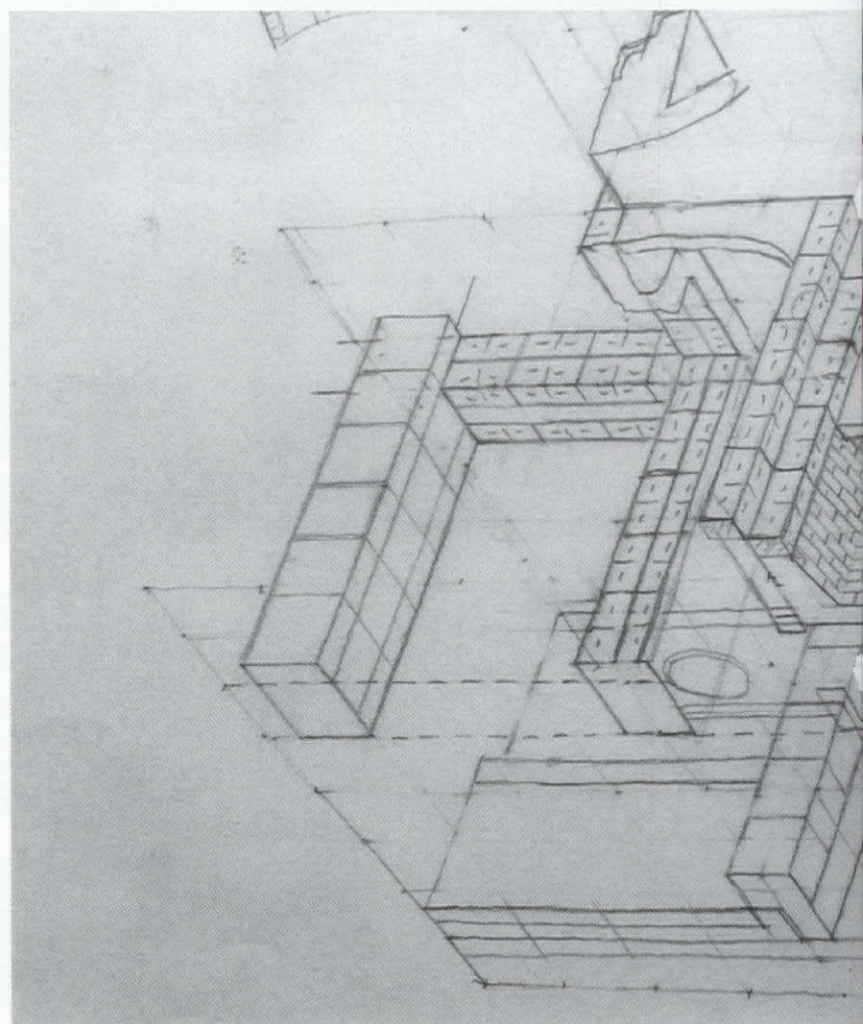
La Miniatura presented me with a challenge in that there is such a subtle interplay between the building and the site, the lush landscaping, the reflecting pond. I always try to capture this relationship. However, for my own sanity, I have to separate the two elements. I prepare a pencil drawing of the building itself, and then, a separate pencil for all the landscaping.

I work with a light table, which allows me to trace my pencil image in black ink onto my render paper. Objects that are in front go in first, hence, all the shrubs and the canopy of leaves along the top. I color everything in with marking pens. It's like the world's most elaborate coloring book. Once the foreground is in, then the building goes in, and finally, the landscaping in the background. Pen and ink allows for no mistakes. I make them anyway, but you try to hide them!

People always ask how long does it take. I have no idea. Capturing the subject to the best of my ability is the goal. I am mindful of the time involved, but I blithely ignore it. It takes what it takes.

The original is 5 feet across. Standing before it, one can move closer and only look at certain parts with no loss of detail—viewers are always finding new things to see. Just about every space is included. I was only sorry I couldn't work in the garages, as they are on the opposite side of the building. The finished drawing becomes a fantastic memory piece for both buyer and seller, which really makes it a good deal easier to let a beloved property change hands.

—Kurt Wahlner

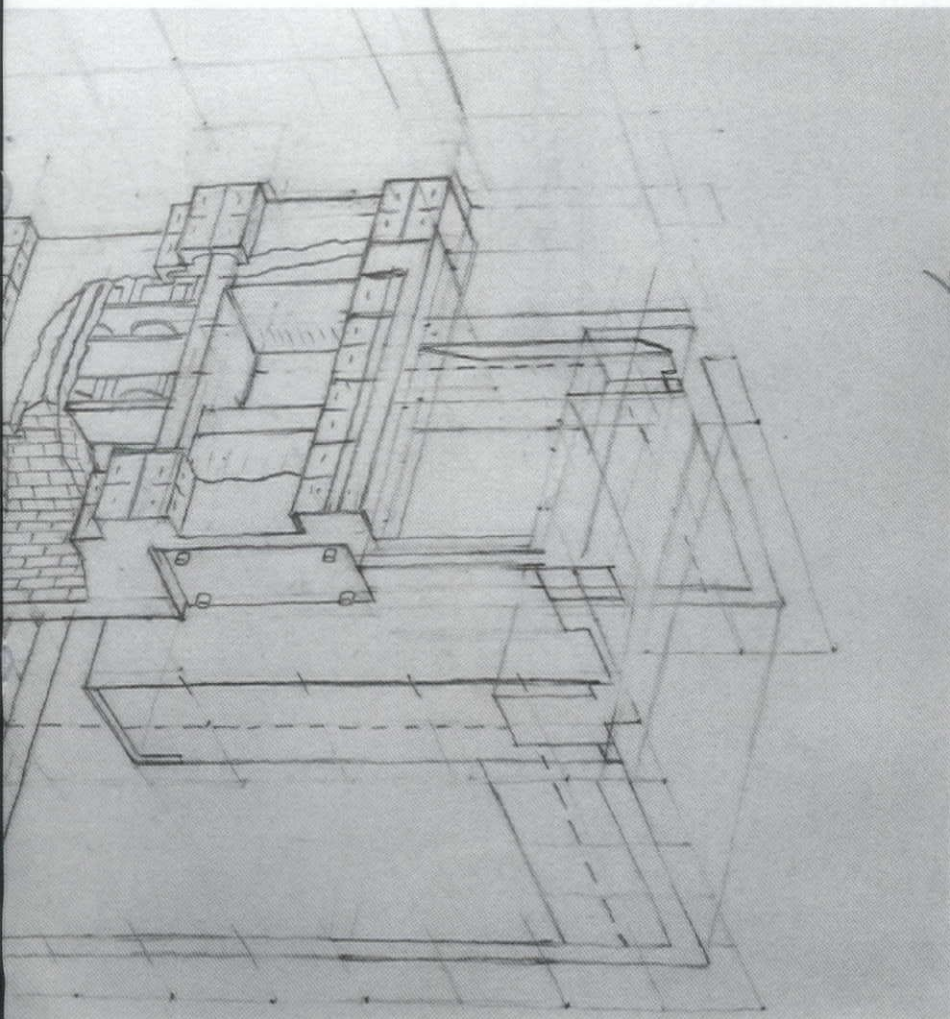
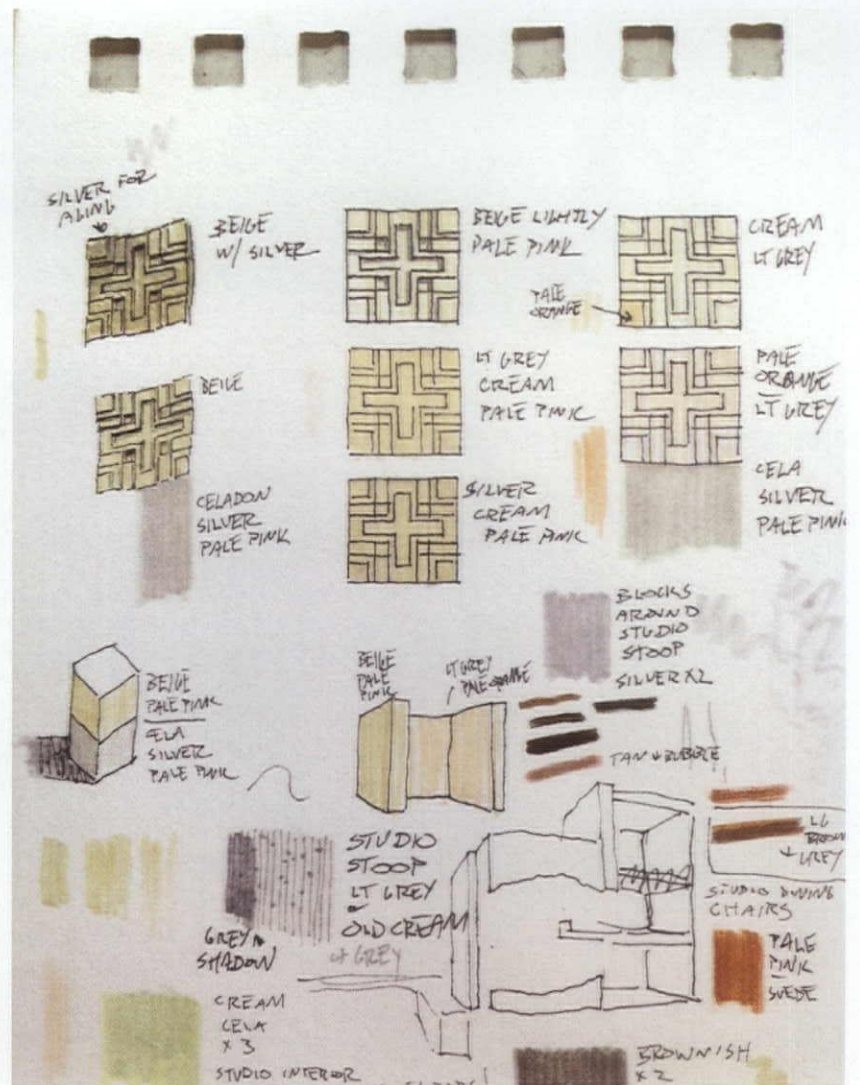




My process begins by collecting as much data from the building as possible. Fortunately for me, the Millard House is made of 16-inch concrete tiles, so taking measurements was not necessary. You just look at it to realize that 3 tiles equals 4 feet and so on. I also take as many digital photographs of the exterior as I can with the sun more-or-less in the same place. Then, I shoot pictures of every nook and cranny of the interior. On this one, I took over 700 pictures. It's giddy fun, since none of the pictures really are all that great—they're all dark and blurry—you couldn't possibly run them in a magazine like this one. But I only need a record of what is where.

While visiting the building, I rush about like a madman. But later in my studio, I focus myself and come up with the "pose"; how do I show the relationships and the inner workings and still have it look like the complete building? To me, an especially critical element was to reveal the sets of stairs which circulate around the fireplace. I love doing staircases, the more elaborate, the better. Opening up the house vertically like a steamer trunk helped to show this detail, but also had the added attraction of showing what I know everybody wants to see: what do the bathrooms and kitchen look like? Everyone wants to know what the bathrooms in a Frank Lloyd Wright house look like.

Once I have decided how best to present the building, one could ask, "Where on earth do you start?" My method for dealing with such a complex series of shapes is simple: I throw a grid over it. Length, breadth and width. This results in sort of a "cage" of rows and columns: this building fits into this cage. Draw the cage in the pose you want, then all I have to do is draw what is in each cube, and persevere to the end! I actually learned this technique from looking at some drawings Wright did of the Ennis House. An "Ah-Ha!" moment indeed. I think the most challenging portion to do was the seen-from-below kitchen in the studio—a small space, lots going on, and I wanted to look at it from underneath! A brain-teaser, for sure. ■



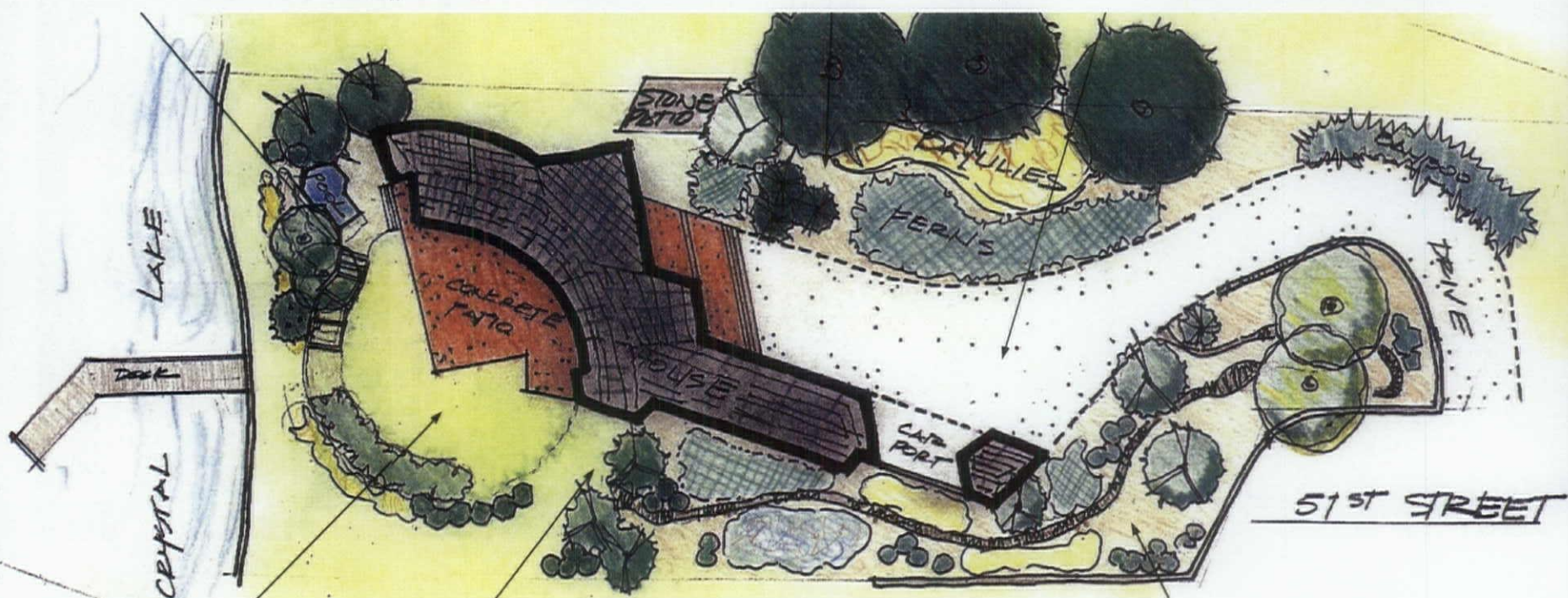
Kurt Wahlner  
 Millard House, "La Miniatura" and Studio  
 Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect, 1923 and Lloyd Wright, Architect 1926  
 Pasadena, California  
 Exploded View  
 2013  
 60" x 26"  
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## Frank Lloyd Wright's "Cooke House"

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Sketch of the grounds by J. Barry Frankenfield, FASLA

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# The Recent Sale of the *Manola Apartments* by Architect Rudolph Schindler defies the use of Standard Appraisal Techniques:

By John C. Carlson

The terraced property at 1807 Edgecliffe Drive in L.A.'s Silver Lake neighborhood isn't just any apartment complex. Designed by legendary architect Rudolf Schindler with broad windows and double-height ceilings, the 16-unit Manola Court apartments is a unique artists' community set within hillside gardens, its living spaces connected by walkways. Built in 1926 for Romanian-born artist Herman Sachs, best known in Southern California as the creator of the mural at the entry of Bullock's Wilshire, the compound not only included Sachs' personal residence and studio but was an artistic commune of sorts, evolving over time and occupying three adjacent lots until it resembled a European hill town. Yet, it is also a prime example of modernist architecture.



Time, however, had not been kind to the property when it went on the market this year for \$2.5 million. The buildings needed substantial improvements, and the aging interiors cried out for restoration. But given the scale of the property and increasing popularity of the area, Manola Court was still likely to find a buyer quickly despite its disrepair and faded glory. But how do you put a price on a property like this—a piece of real estate that could be considered an eyesore to one person and a treasure to another? One buyer's teardown is another's restoration-worthy classic. "Trophy properties" like these are not only prone to creating controversy, but they completely defy the use of Standard Appraisal Techniques.

Most appraisers are lost when it comes to the valuation of architect-designed properties. In trying to apply standard valuation methods that will be acceptable to their lender clients, appraisers often miss the mark. Using comparables within "1-mile of the property" that "sold in the last year"—typical lender valuation measures—is wholly inadequate for evaluating this kind of real estate. The experienced buyer of a trophy architectural property is drawn to the "art" aspect of it along with the real estate value. But what the "art" is worth is especially difficult to measure.

Because I specialize in the valuation of architect-designed properties, I was retained by the Trust that owned the Manola Court Apartments to complete an appraisal on their behalf. Generally, I begin any valuation with researching the "Provenance" of the property, whether it is residential, or an apartment building like this. If one looks up the word "provenance," the definition primarily pertains to art work, antiques or collectibles. Not real estate. However, I would argue that an architect-designed property is a "work of art"—which defies normal valuation methodologies. [In addition, it is possible to distinguish two meanings for provenance: first, as a concept, it denotes the source of derivation of an object, in this case an architectural property, and second, more concretely, it is used to refer to a "record" of such a derivation.]

Analyzing the provenance or pedigree of a property involves researching the name of the architect and determining the architect's prominence, along with researching the prior ownership of the property and determining if any of the prior owners were notable with regard to the history of the building and/or the area in which the property is located. The degree of provenance has an impact upon its value as well. To measure this, I have defined three different "levels" of provenance—e.g., whether the original owner was important to the area or whether a name architect was involved even though the house may not be historically significant, whether it is historically and architecturally significant and warrants a premium based on those factors [visit my Website at: [www.jccrea.com](http://www.jccrea.com) for a more detailed explanation].

Even after all of the above is evaluated, measuring the value of an architect-designed property is still tricky. The most important consideration in any valuation of this type of property is checking comparable sales in order to measure whether buyers are paying a premium, and if so, what is that premium. In general, appraisers have difficulty in measuring this premium because either they have not bothered to give the provenance any thought or because even if they have, properties of this sort are very scarce to find since few sell in a given year. In addition, current lender requirements often do not allow the time necessary for residential appraisers to complete a proper analysis like this.





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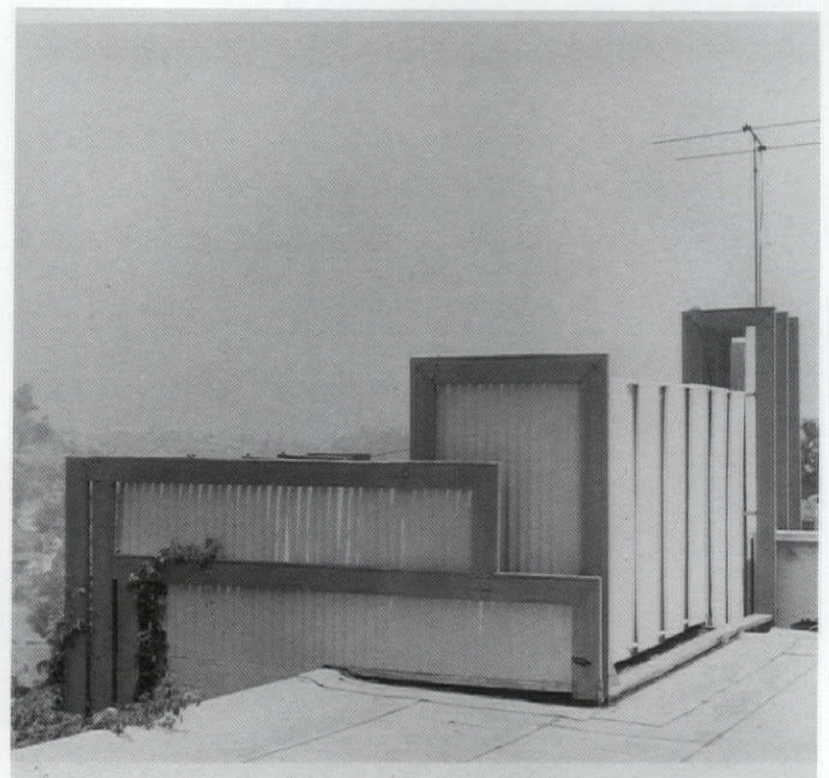
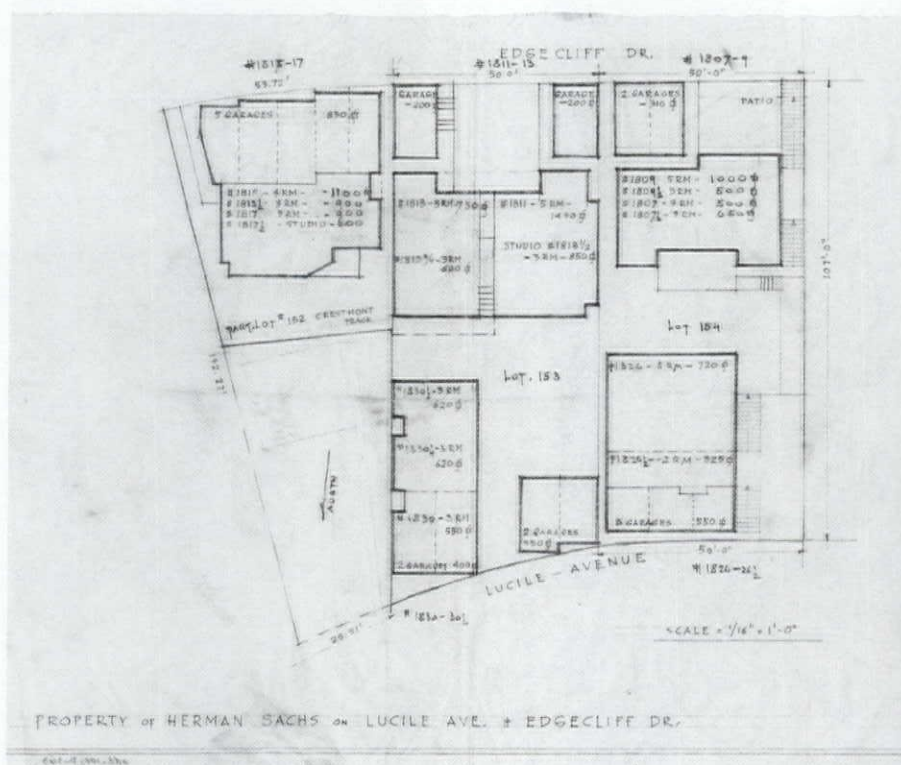


The same procedures are used in measuring any premium from world-class architecture as are used in measuring the "contributory value" of any amenity. Take a pool, for instance. The appraiser who wants to measure the contributory value of a pool first finds several sales of similar properties with pools and then locates several sales without pools. The difference in the value between the two indicates the contributory value of the pool in that particular neighborhood. But if recent sales in the immediate or nearby area where an architectural property is located are not available, most appraisers just give up and report that there was no way to measure a premium. However, I would argue that there are ways to measure the Provenance of a property, they just take time. In addition, appraisers must not limit themselves to a tight geographical area to approximate an answer and so a comparable sale does not have to be so close to the architect designed property being appraised.

You can also find properties that were located at a distance from the property that's being appraised and measure whether they sold at a premium within their market area. For instance, if an architecturally significant property in one area sold for \$2 million and a more "typical" property nearby sold for \$1.5 million, the architectural property sold for a 25% premium over the non-architectural property. When you can assemble several sales like this and obtain several premium indicators, this can be applied to the property you are appraising. This kind of analysis requires a larger number of comparables to develop a range in premiums – it is much better than just giving up.

So, how did I do in the valuation of Schindler's hillside apartment complex? Despite all my experience and the thoughtful methodologies I have developed, I appraised the Manola Apartments for less than 2 million on an "as-is" basis. (I cannot divulge my actual appraised value). Appraising the building on an "as-is" basis means that I took into consideration the costs for the for the substantial work the buildings required, which is correct appraisal methodology. Yet the property was more in demand than anyone expected and sold 6-months after my appraisal for \$2.9 million. There were 14 bids on the property many of which were over asking price which proves the architectural value of the property.

I am delighted that it sold for a higher price because I now have a prime example of the premium for which a non-standard architect-designed trophy property would sell to add to my database of comparable sales. After all, why shouldn't architecture sell like art? ■



Photography By: Grant Mudford  
Black & White Photography: Architecture and Design Collection / Art, Design & Architecture Museum / University of California, Santa Barbara





# Out of Castries

Nancy Dowd Reflects on  
*belmont*

"I had a farm in Africa at the foot of the Ngong Hills." I read that opening sentence of the great masterpiece for the first time in 1982 on a round the world trip that ended in the Eastern Caribbean on the island nation of Saint Lucia where I would spend the first night in my newly purchased historic home which the taxi driver could not find. Nor could I. It was after midnight. No cell phones. And a nation-wide power outage. A pitch dark port town. I had two suitcases; one contained two pairs of double bed sheets and some towels. Rule number one: be sure to stumble into the void with your own towels and sheets. Isak Dinesen was all the rage at the time, and it would worsen when the movie version of "Out of Africa" was released a couple years later. Of course, I'm no Karen Blixen. But soon enough I would be forced to admit, I have a house in Castries at the top of Lastic Hill.





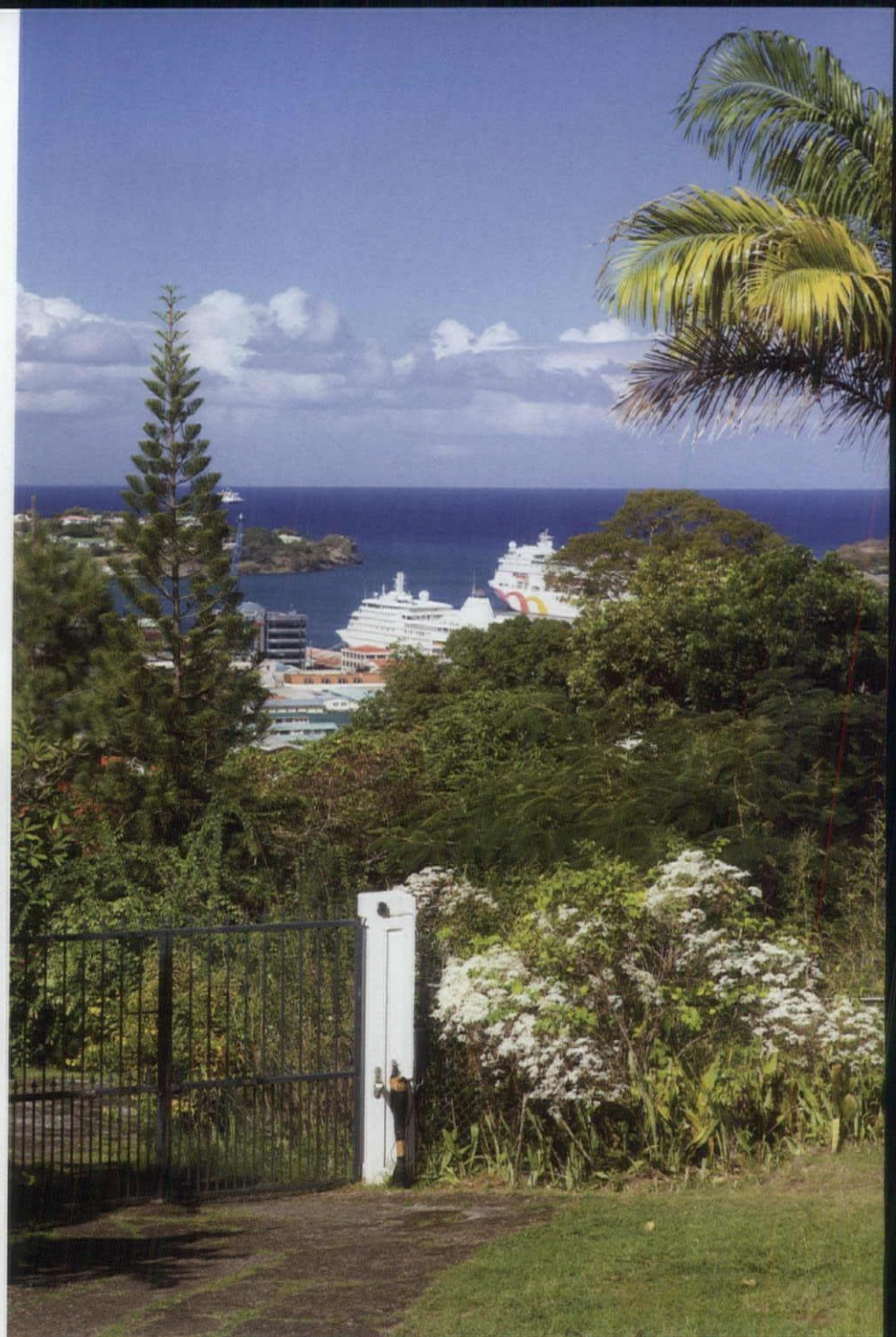
I am always asked what made you move to Saint Lucia. In truth: I don't know. Of course, it was the house. It was Belmont, always Belmont. To seem engaging, I have a little spiel which is in part true: I was on my way to Jamaica to visit Bob Marley, there was a Writer's Guild strike and the rest is history. All true but not the answer. In fact, there was the parking space incident. A famous old Hollywood screenwriter told me that he was livid, just livid: his parking space on the studio lot had been taken away. His wife was out of town, he had dyed hair and there were crystal figurines in a custom made vitrine in his Beverly Hills living room. I thought get me out of here. Is this all there is? Just get me out of here or I will end up bemoaning a parking space. I had always wanted a life of adventure. I had few unfulfilled aspirations. In effect, I wanted to enjoy life, see the wide world and understand it. I don't like company towns.

Logically, therefore, I bought a nineteenth century wooden house in a West Indian port town. Really. I was alone. In my early thirties. I had absolutely no business doing this. I knew nothing. A room of one's own? Fine. Sure. Got it. Yup. But a large hundred year old house on a West Indian island no one had ever heard of? And, to make matters worse, I already had a house of my own, a perfectly lovely 1920's hacienda in the Hollywood Hills right under the "H." What was I doing here? In this Quarterly devoted to architectural masterpieces, I suppose someone has to make the case for architectural madness. I fell in love with a house. I wanted to live in that house. Period. It's been the longest relationship of my life.





What happens in a case like mine? The oft-documented restoration decoration frustration of the chattering classes abroad, the plumber not showing up (what plumber?), the psycho phone company where I am sure I am on the Do Not Resuscitate list, the sheer inconvenience of everything island, ad nauseam. Of course. And worse. However, Belmont has been much more than that. It is a Creole stately home, one of the finest and now most well-preserved houses in the Eastern Caribbean, those islands that stretch from Anguilla down to Grenada. It was built in 1895 by a local Saint Lucian family. It is not a colonial house. Its tradition is decidedly French. It sits atop Lastic Hill, named for the man who built it, overlooking the port of Castries, the capital of Saint Lucia. It is surrounded by nearly nine acres of tropical trees and flowers. It is a very pretty property, and it has been very important to me. Belmont made me learn. History, art, architecture, botany, horticulture, birds, trees, flowers. On my own, no classes, no internet at the beginning.







Just me and books. It kept me fit: swimming in the warm Caribbean Sea, no winters. It kept me out of the rat race: I will never have a parking space on the lot. It's been the perfect setting for dogs, parties, affairs, house guests, reading, thinking, long friendships. And I have had the exquisite privilege of living in its considerable beauty for nearly half my life. Sometimes, I wonder what it is like to be Belmont, itself. As in the case of, say, Marilyn Monroe, Grace Kelly, Jacqueline Kennedy, Jon Hamm, what must it be like to have everyone exclaim, Oh, but you are gorgeous! I'll never know. But it happens to Belmont all the time. Living in beautiful proportions in a lovely old house in perfect weather does not hurt, I can assure you.

Why am I selling? Because it's time. Will there be an "Out of Castries?" No, but not for lack of material. I own a small apartment in Paris in the heart of Saint- Germain. It's always something. And, like all of us, I am running out of time. When I leave Belmont, it will show no sign of me. I didn't build it, I did not draw it from scratch, I didn't even commission it. I just lived there. Yes, I saved it. But I will be forever grateful to this wonderful house which gave me happiness at times, solace at others, watery dawns, heart-stopping sunsets and delicious mangoes. I did it. ■



**Belmont, Queen of Castries  
Lastic Hill, Castries  
Saint Lucia, West Indies**



4



4



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N

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Photography By: Mikael Lamber / Postcard Pix Of Belmont By: Daniel Aubry.





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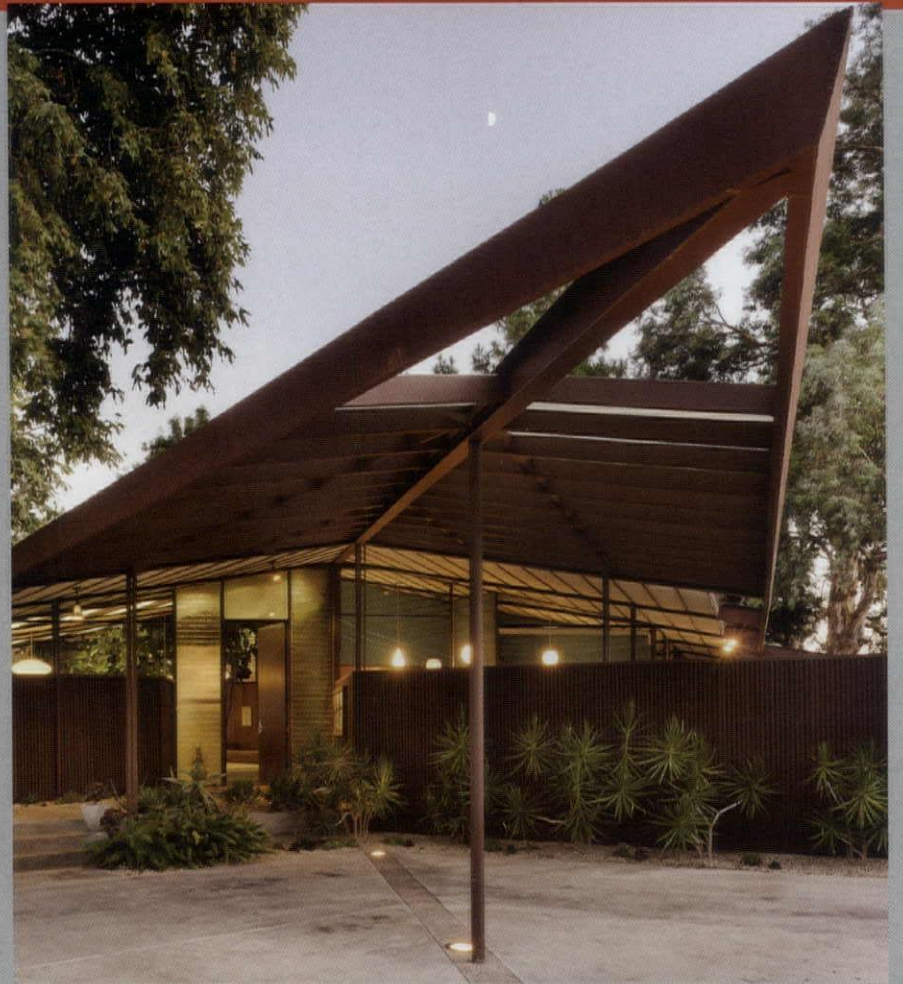
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#970  
French Riviera, FR

Raphaële Segond, Architect  
\$4,902,000



#932  
New Canaan, Connecticut

R. Graff of E. Noyes, Architects  
\$2,499,000



#981 / **SOLD**  
Paris 13th, Paris, FR

Le Corbusier, Architect  
\$3,064,000



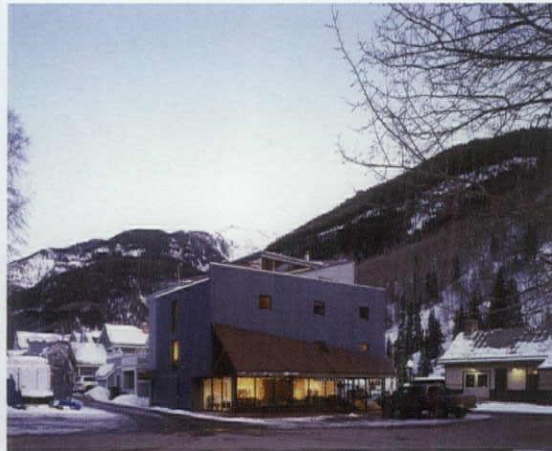
#950  
Cold Spring, NY

River Architects  
\$1,600,000



#967  
Fontainebleau, Near Paris, FR

1970s Design Residence  
\$2,002,000



#902  
Plunge Landing, Telluride

Smith-Miller & Hawkinson, Architect  
Package: \$4,375,000



#960  
Paris 16th, Paris, FR

Robert Mallet-Stevens, Architect  
\$3,909,000





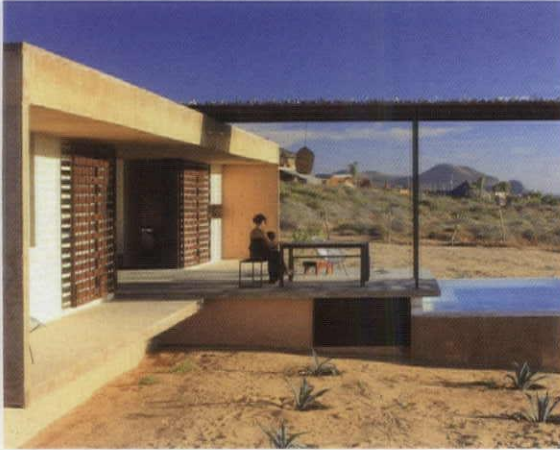
#980 **J.T. Glancey, G. Rockwell & Associates**  
Horizon Point, Boise, ID \$2,150,000



#904 **Louis I. Kahn, Architect**  
Philadelphia, PA \$1,100,000



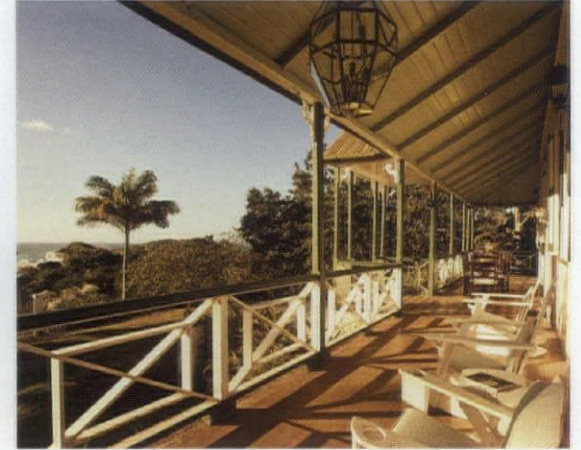
#943 / **SOLD** **James Grose, Architect**  
Paroa Bay, Russell- New Zealand \$965,000



#957 **Gracia Studio Baja Beach House**  
Calle dos las Ballenas, Todos Santos, MX \$479,000



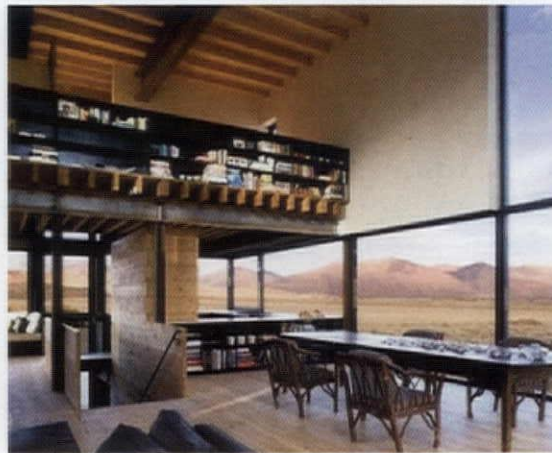
#937 **James Steward Polshek, Architect**  
Chappaqua, NY \$2,895,000



#861 **Belmont, Queen of Castries**  
Saint Lucia, West Indies \$1,495,000



#942 **Richard Foster, Architect**  
Ridgefield, Connecticut \$3,999,995



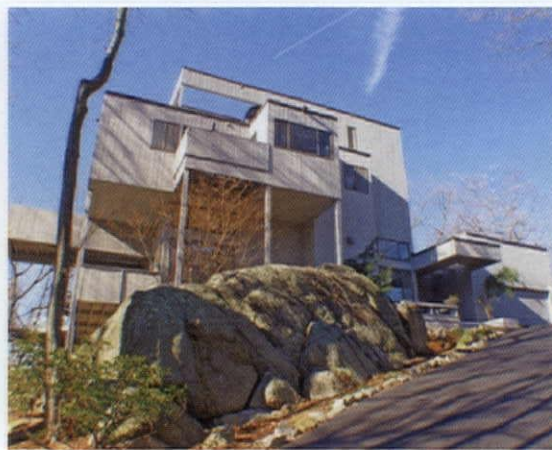
#858 **Olson Kundig Architects**  
Bellevue, ID \$2,750,000



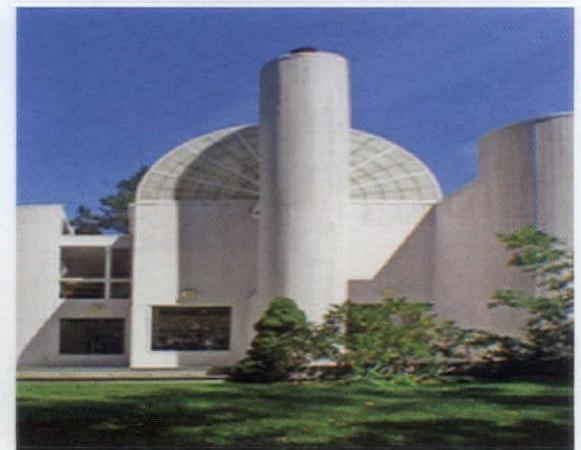
#966 **Pol Abraham, Architect**  
Louveciennes, FR \$2,931,000



#969 **Pierre-Louis Martin, Architect**  
Near Bordeaux, FR \$1,564,000



#965 **Alfredo De Vido, Architect**  
Armonk, NY \$1,395,000



#949 **Ed Ozols, Architect**  
Pound Ridge, NY \$2,475,000





#962 WXY & Morris/Sato, New York  
Falls Village, CT \$2,650,000



#929 Richard T. Broderick, A.I.A.  
Anacortes, WA \$1,195,000



#964 The Colton Residence, 1954  
Hartsdale, NY \$999,000



#989 Eric Daniel-Lacombe, Architect  
Moulineaux, FR \$7,779,000



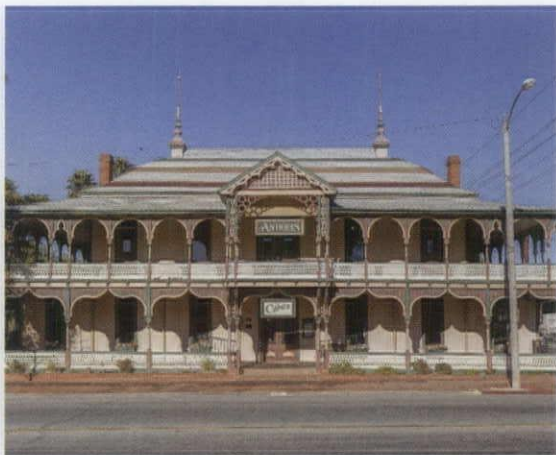
#959 Valentino Agnoli, Architect  
Branford, FL \$550,000



#977 Mathias Kauten 1950-52  
Linwood, NJ \$599,000



#982 Jules Gregory, Architect  
Lambertville, NJ \$999,000



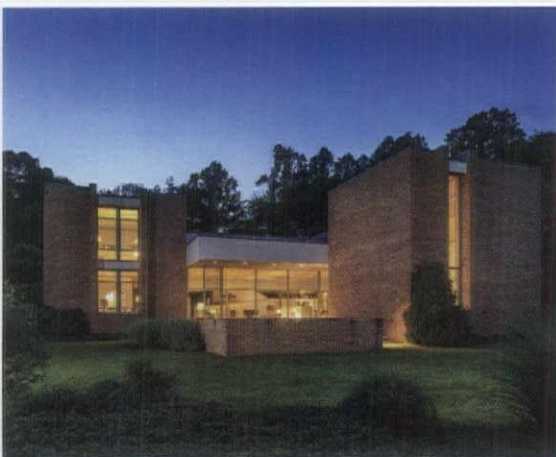
#955 Frank Ferris, Architect  
Lake Elsinore, CA \$749,000



#951 / **SOLD** Aaron Resnick, Architect  
Pleasantville, NY \$949,000



#844 / **SOLD** Elmer Grey, F.A.I.A. - 1928  
Avalon, Catalina Island - California \$2,950,000

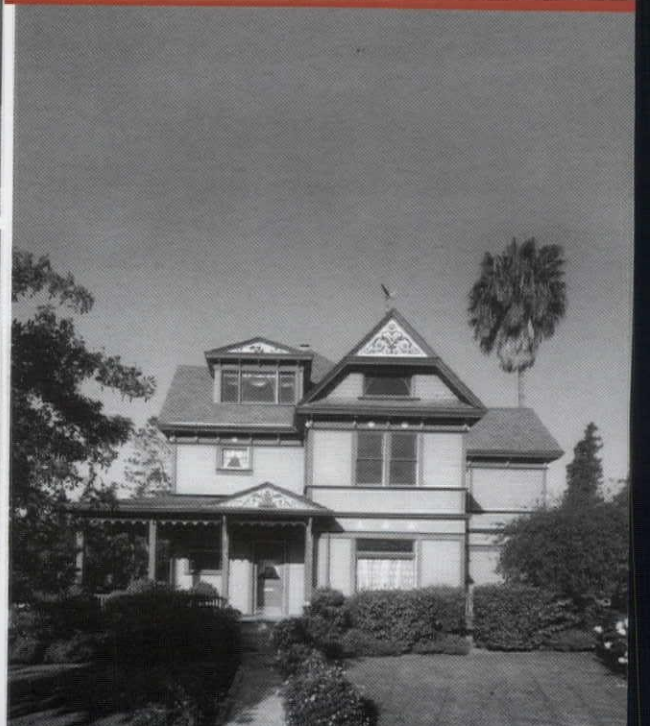
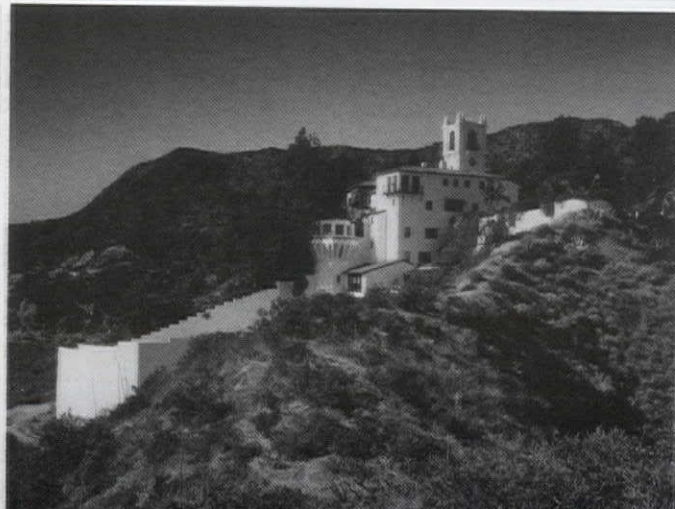
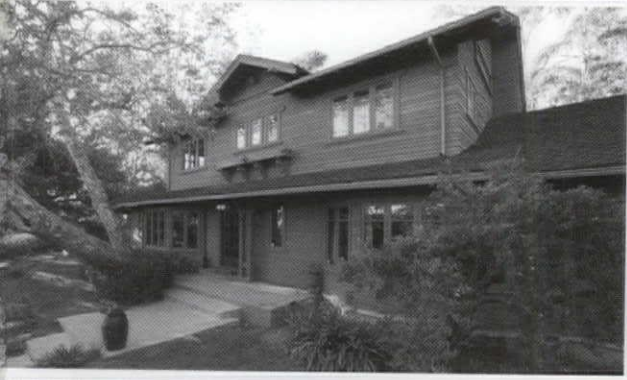
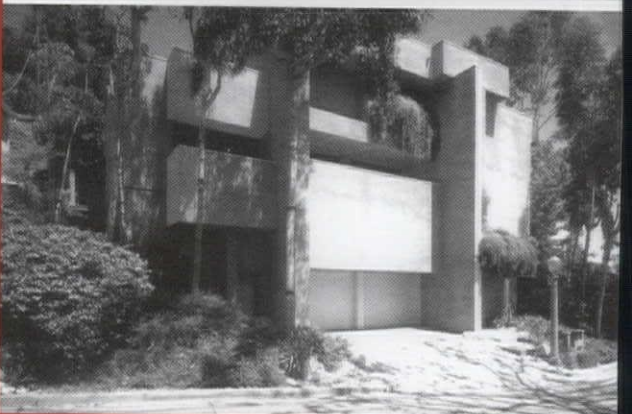
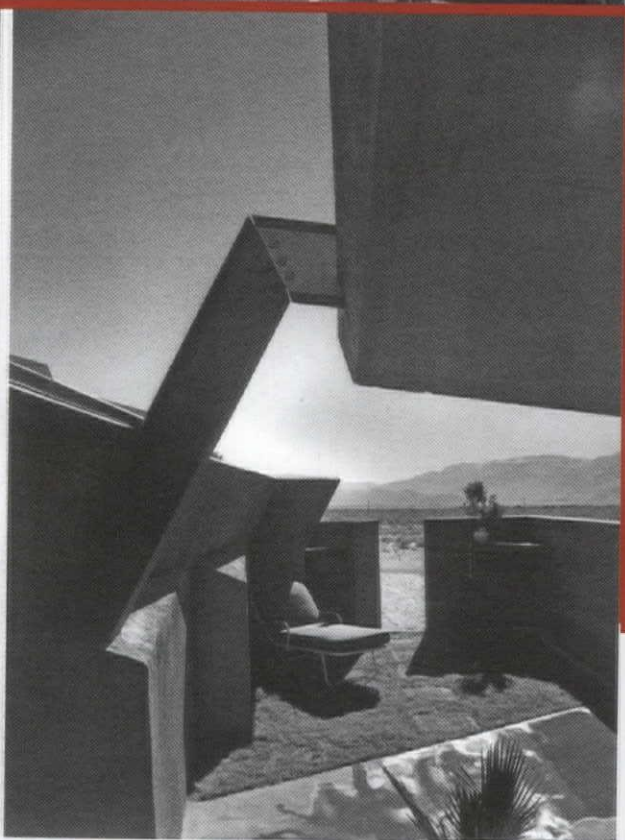
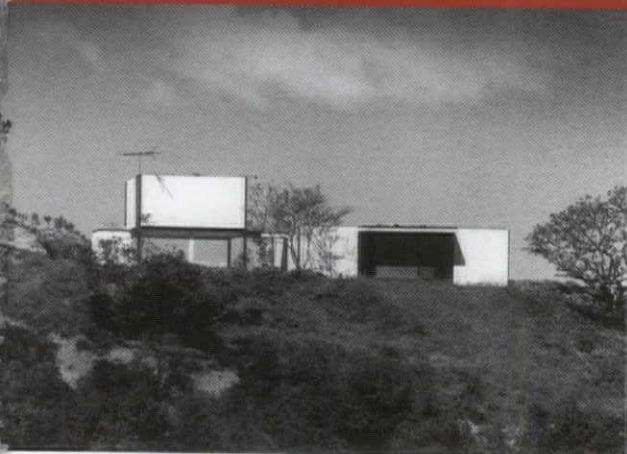
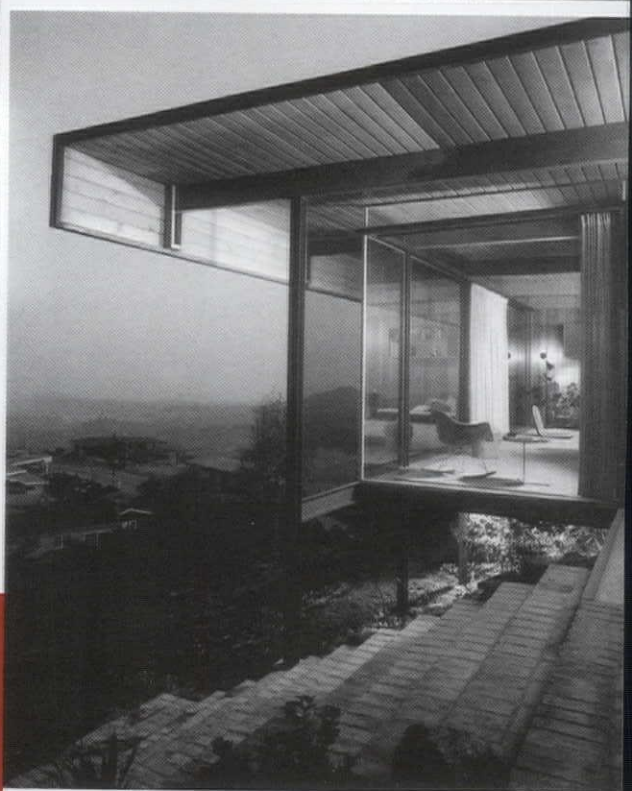
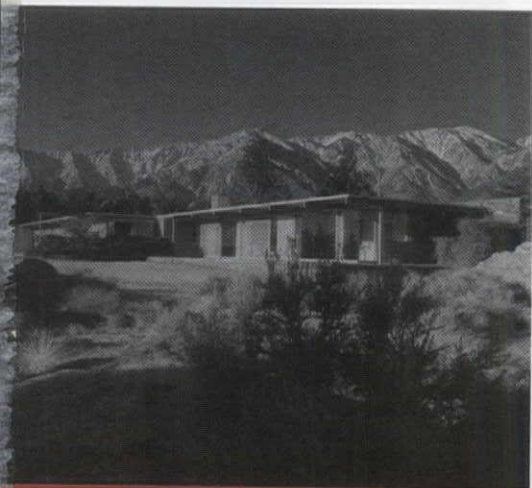


#987 Ulrich Franzen, Architect  
New Canaan, CT \$5,500,000

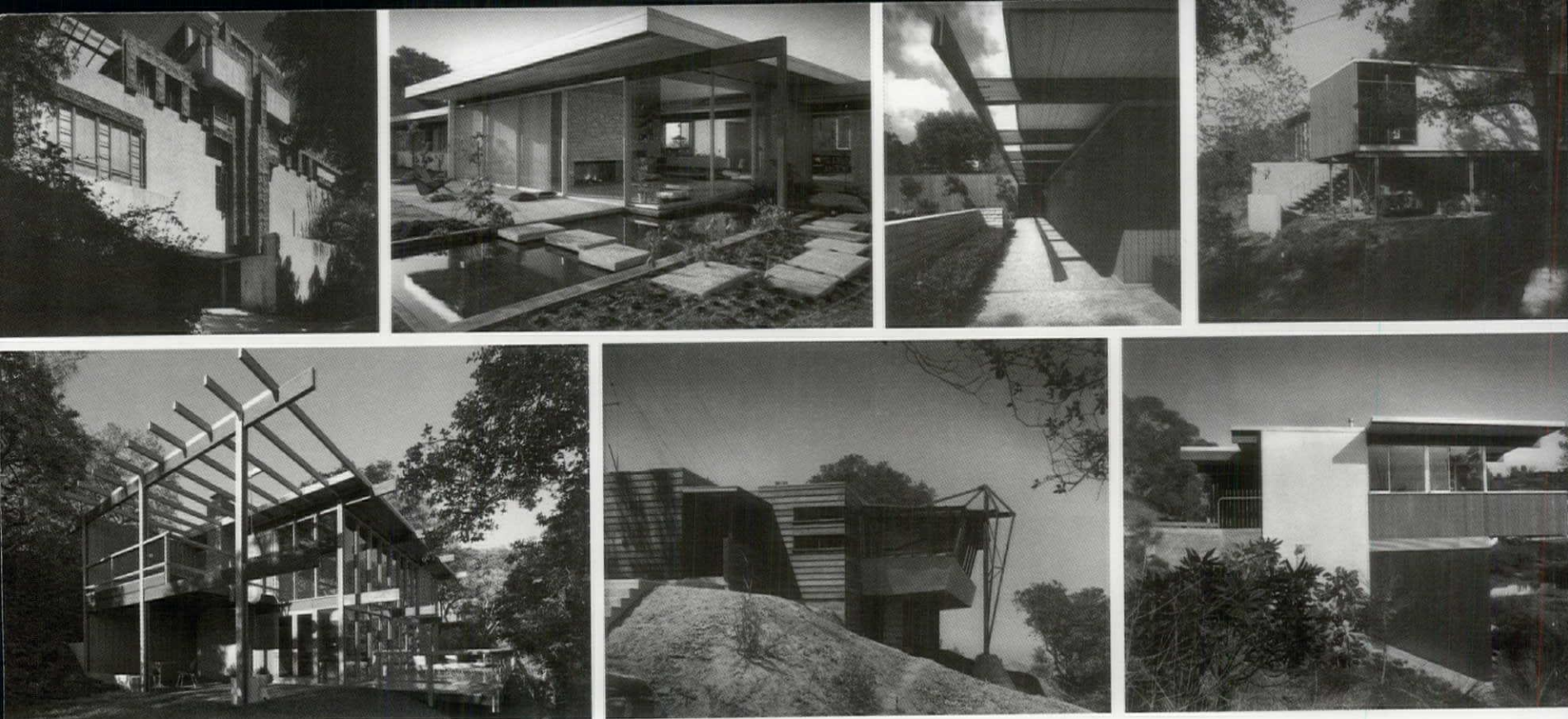


#987 Jerrold E. Lomax, F.A.I.A.  
Los Angeles, CA \$2,225,000

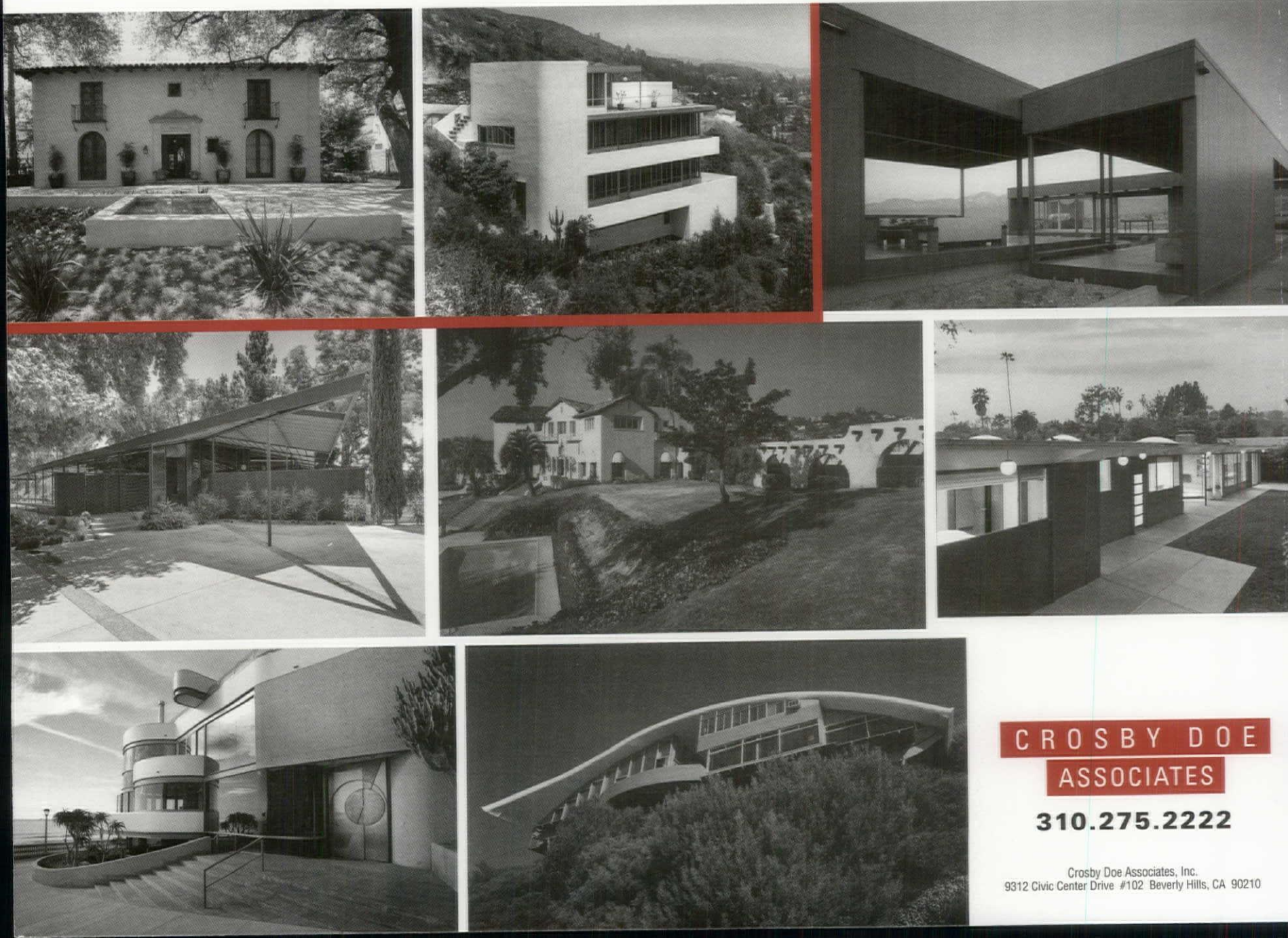








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