

architecture **for** sale

Quarterly

WINTER 2014

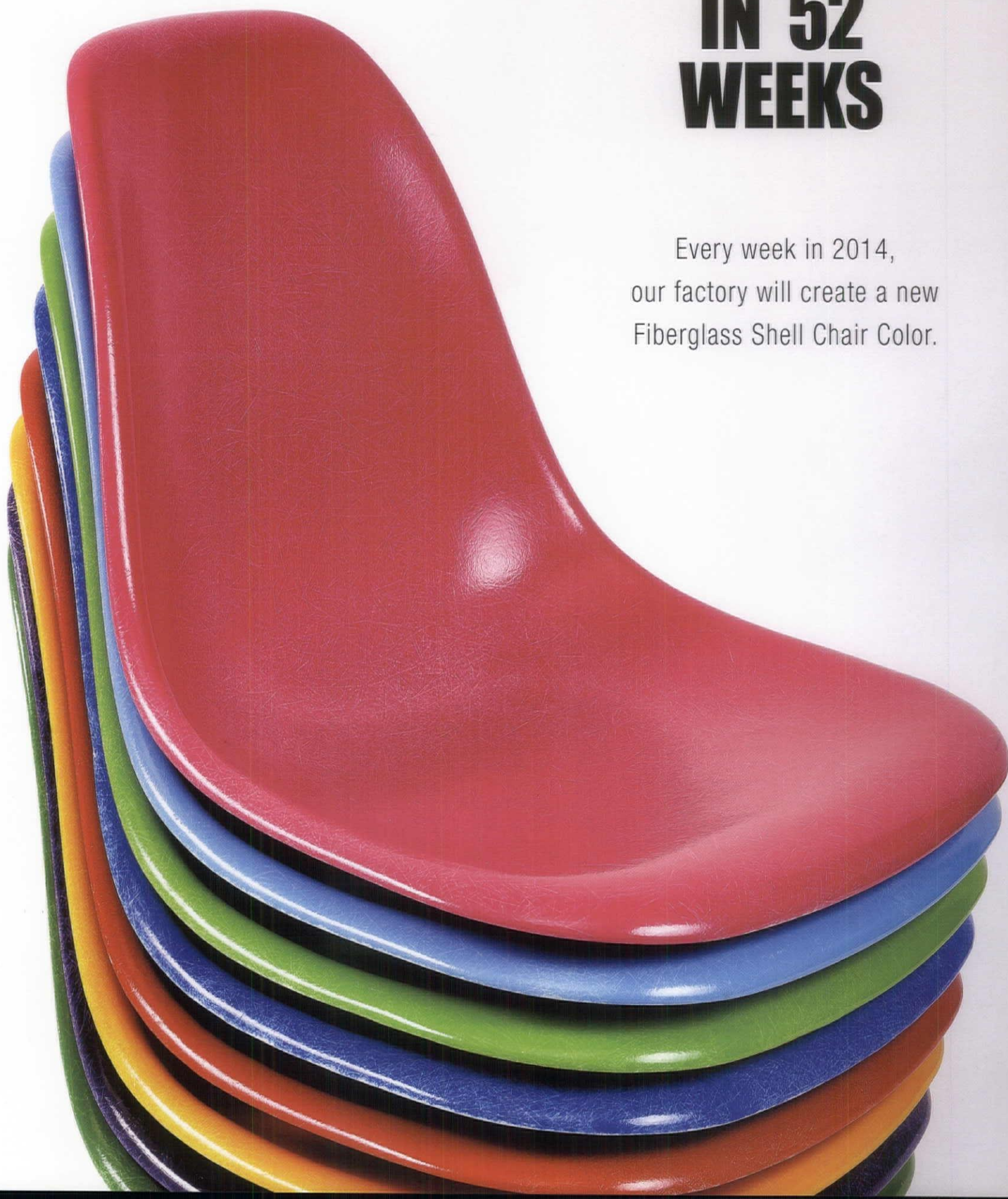
\$5.95

JOHN LAUTNER, F.A.I.A. — SILVERTOP

The Reiner - Burchill Residence, 1957 - 1976
Silver Lake District, Los Angeles

52 COLORS IN 52 WEEKS

Every week in 2014,
our factory will create a new
Fiberglass Shell Chair Color.





A COMMITMENT TO BENEFIT UN WOMEN

Cameron Diaz and TAG Heuer support UN Women and its mission to empower women worldwide. To learn more please visit tagheuer.com



TAGHeuer

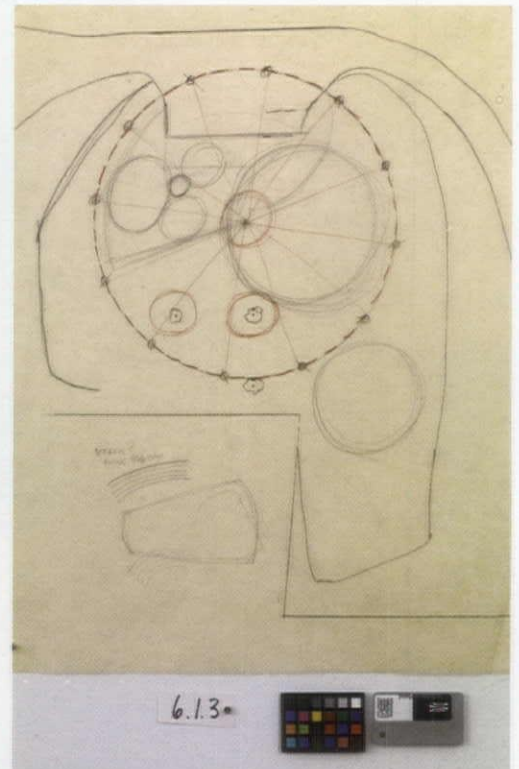
SWISS AVANT-GARDE SINCE 1860

J JEWELRY COUTURE
by Schall *The Bridal Store*

FINE SWISS WATCHES AND GIFTS

390 S. Mills Road • Ventura, CA 93003 • 805.650.0005
www.JewelryCouture.com

Contents



6

EDITOR'S NOTE

7

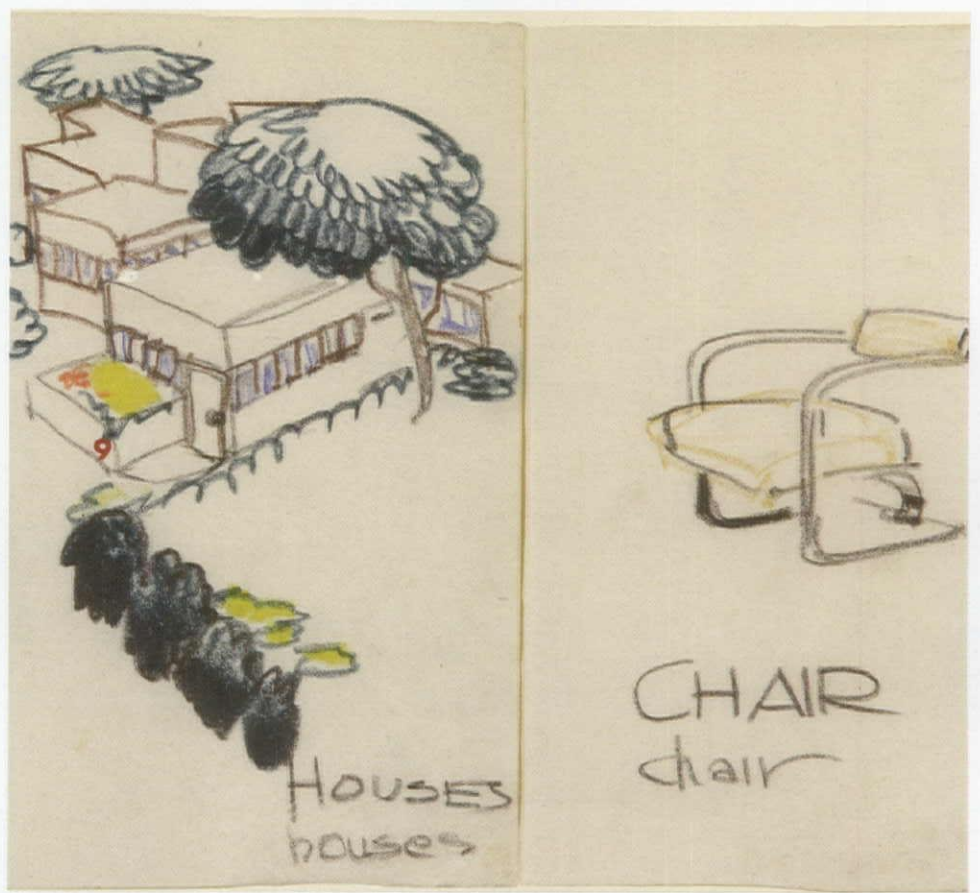
CONTRIBUTORS

9

LABORATORIES FOR LIVING

The challenges of modern life put architect's creativity to the test.

By Nicholas Olsberg



Contents

26

ADAPTATION AND PERSEVERANCE

Greene & Greene's 'modest majesty' re-imagined for next generation.

By Mimi Zeiger

40

SOARING SPACE

John Lautner takes engineering advances into the realm of artistry.

By Frank Escher

62

A RARE OFFERING IN NEUTRA'S SILVER LAKE COLONY

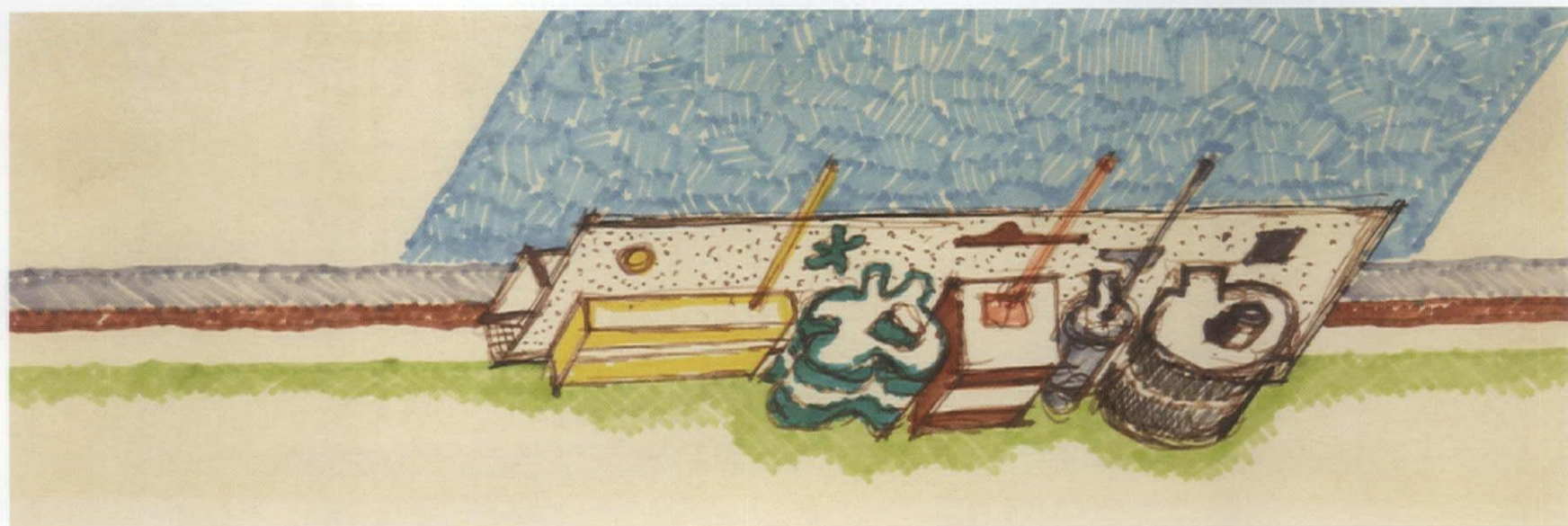
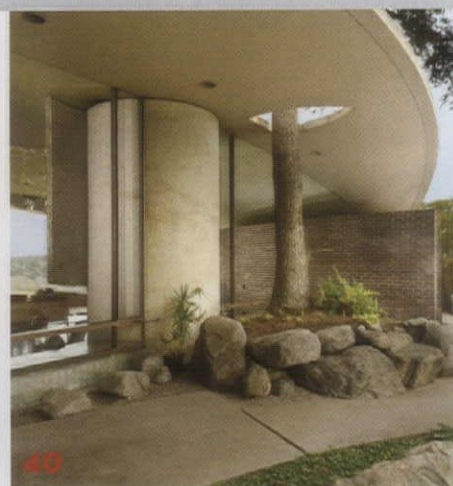
After 53 years, the impeccably maintained Kambara Residence is offered for sale.

By Barbara Lamprecht

78

ON THE MARKET

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





EDITOR'S NOTE

THE GAME CHANGER

In a perfect world, it might seem, any piece of real estate on the market that is showcased in an architecture magazine like this one would still be available for sale when the issue reaches the reader. But after only a few issues of *architectureforsale quarterly*, I've found that the publishing process is so intensive – between researching, writing, acquiring rights to photos, to say nothing of the detailed demands of design and production—that it's inevitable some featured properties will be sold before the ink dries.

Such is the case with this issue's cover subject – one of L.A.'s most iconic architectural residences, Silvertop. On the market for the first time in 40 years, this arching concrete-and-glass home capping a hill overlooking the Silver Lake Reservoir is arguably John Lautner's masterpiece. So it should be no surprise that it sold well before we went to press. But as then, Silvertop has always been, and will always be, a game changer—for the city, the community, and the legendary architect himself. And for me too, I was introduced to the landmark when it was sold for the first time in 1974. It was a revelation to discover Lautner's bold design and recognize the breadth of ingenuity that exists in Los Angeles. The sight of Silvertop inspired me to learn more about architecture and architects, giving me that much more incentive to stay on top of the real-estate market in every way I could. In short, it changed my life. It was also a game changer for the Burchill family, who have owned it ever since, shaping the way they lived their lives. And it will be a game changer for the next family that moves in.

But why feature a property in *architectureforsale quarterly* – on the cover no less – if it has already been sold? The best answer I can offer is that the focus of *architectureforsale quarterly* is not just the properties currently on the market. It is more about the architecture market itself. My goal is to create a home for homes with architectural integrity that have the power to change lives—and marketplaces. Whether they're newly available or recently sold, the properties in *architectureforsale quarterly* deserve and demand attention—and celebration—at any time. Also, the title of the magazine deliberately references architectureforsale.com, the growing and increasingly vital online real-estate site where you can find information about international, world-class architecture. In keeping with the game-changing spirit, architectureforsale.com was the first to announce the availability of Silvertop – the day before it was made public in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Aside from getting the story of Silvertop in this issue, you can also look forward to expanded content, such as Nicholas Olsberg's article on "Laboratories For The Living: Architects And The Modern House," and important newsworthy events which impact the market for architecture. As always, I hope you enjoy the issue and find a place for it in your library.

Crosby Doe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crosby Doe', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Contributors

NICHOLAS OLSBERG

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.



FRANK ESCHER

Frank Escher, editor of the monograph "John Lautner, Architect", co-curator, with Nicholas Olsberg, of the Hammer Museum John Lautner exhibition, board member of The John Lautner Foundation and the Julius Shulman Institute, was administrator for the Lautner Archive (now at the Getty). He is a principal of Escher GuneWardena Architecture, whose work includes the restoration of Lautner's Chemosphere, and the first phase of the Eames House conservation (with the Getty Conservation Institute and the Eames Foundation).



BARBARA LAMPRECHT

Raised in Canada and New York City, Barbara Lamprecht is a qualified architectural historian specializing in Modern architecture. She is the author of "Richard Neutra - Complete Works" and Neutra - Selected Projects (Taschen 2000, 2004). Her work ranges from technical evaluations of buildings and National Register listings to hands-on project supervision of rehabilitation projects. A forthcoming monograph, The Furniture of Richard Neutra: The Body and the Senses will be released by Wasmuth Verlag, Berlin, in 2015. She has taught architectural history and lectured widely, including the National Building Museum, MOMA SF, and MOCA. Lamprecht earned an M. Arch. from the California State University, Pomona, and is completing her Ph.D. "The Nature of Neutra: Richard Neutra's Roots in 19th and 20th Century Science and Landscape," at the University of Liverpool.



CAMERON CAROTHERS

Cameron Carothers has specialized in photographing architecture and interiors for over 20 years. His work has appeared in numerous publications including Architectural Record, Interiors and Sources, The L.A. Times, The Wall Street Journal and People Magazine. He has a BFA in photography from Art Center College of Design and enjoys serving as adjunct faculty for his Alma Mater. Cameron is based in Los Angeles.



MIMI ZEIGER

Mimi Zeiger is a Los Angeles-based journalist and critic, covering architecture, art, urbanism, and design.



architectureforsale *Quarterly*

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Crosby Doe

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Joan Scheibel

MANAGING EDITOR

Bret Bradigan

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Mark Morrison

FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Crosby Doe

Publishing Consultant

Bradigan Group, LLC

Advertising Consultant

Art Markos

Contact Us

Editorial & Advertising

Crosby Doe Associates, Inc.

9312 Civic Center Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

310.275.2222

The contents of *Architecture For Sale, Quarterly*, may not be used, reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the written consent of the publisher. You can also e-mail us at info@architectureforsale.com

©2014 crosby doe associates, inc.



Save the Date/
December 3-7, 2014/

**TEN
YEARS
OF
DESIGN
MIAMI**

ADAM SILVERMAN

On View at Design Miami XI December 3 – 8, 2014

And selected drawings by Tadao Ando, Iakov Chernikhov, Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas,
Daniel Libeskind, Erich Mendelsohn, Lebbeus Woods, and Frank Lloyd Wright

THE NEW EDWARD CELLA DEBUTS IN EARLY 2015

6018 WILSHIRE BLVD. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90036 (323) 525 0053 EDWARDCELLA.COM

Adam Silverman, *Untitled*, 2014, Stoneware and glaze. 13 x 12 x 12 inches

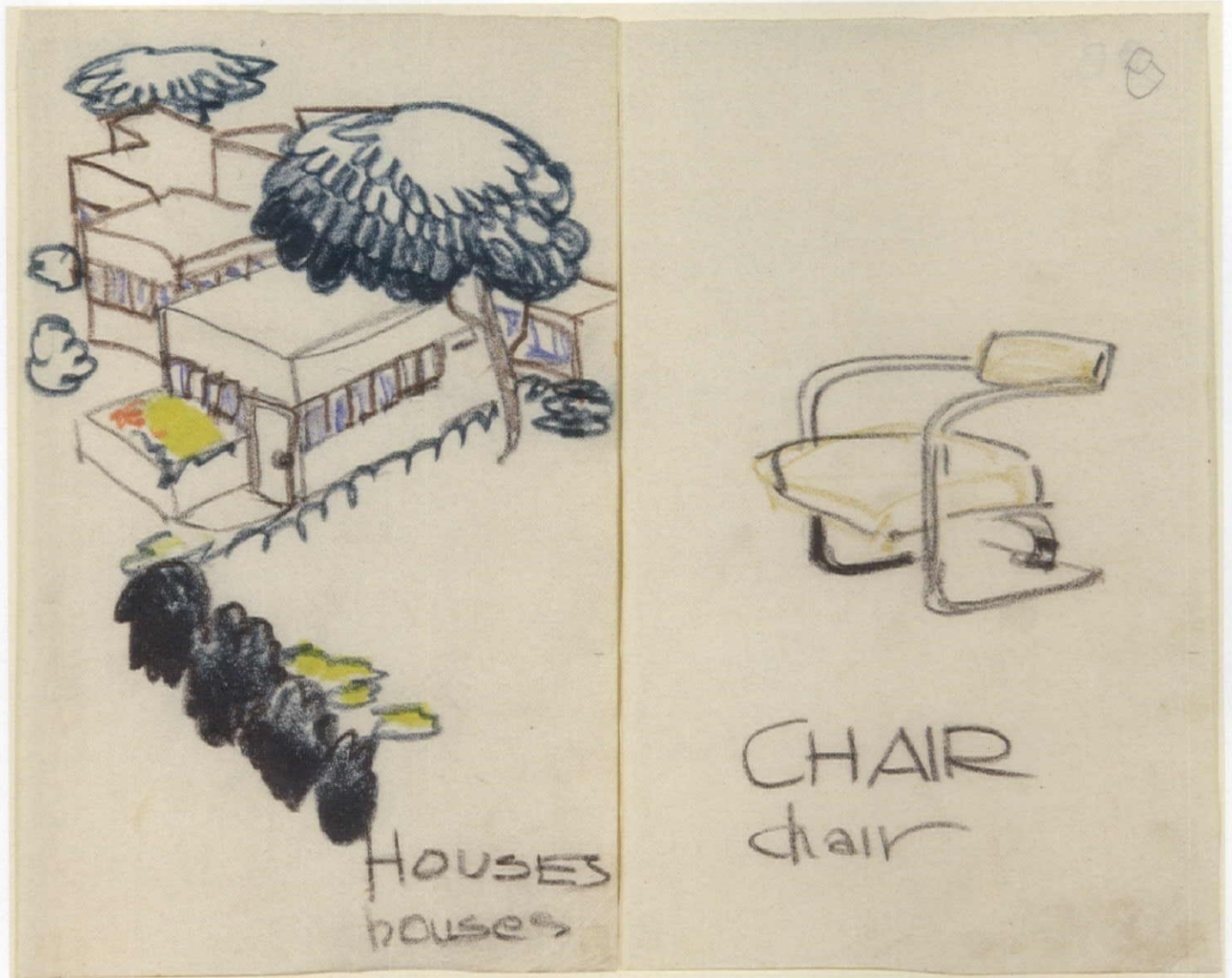
ARCHITECTURE FOR SALE, QUARTERLY - WINTER 2014

EDWARD CELLA

ART + ARCHITECTURE

LABORATORIES FOR LIVING: ARCHITECTS AND THE MODERN HOUSE

— Nicholas Olsberg



Richard Neutra: H is for Houses/C is for Chair
From an alphabet book drawn for his children about 1930

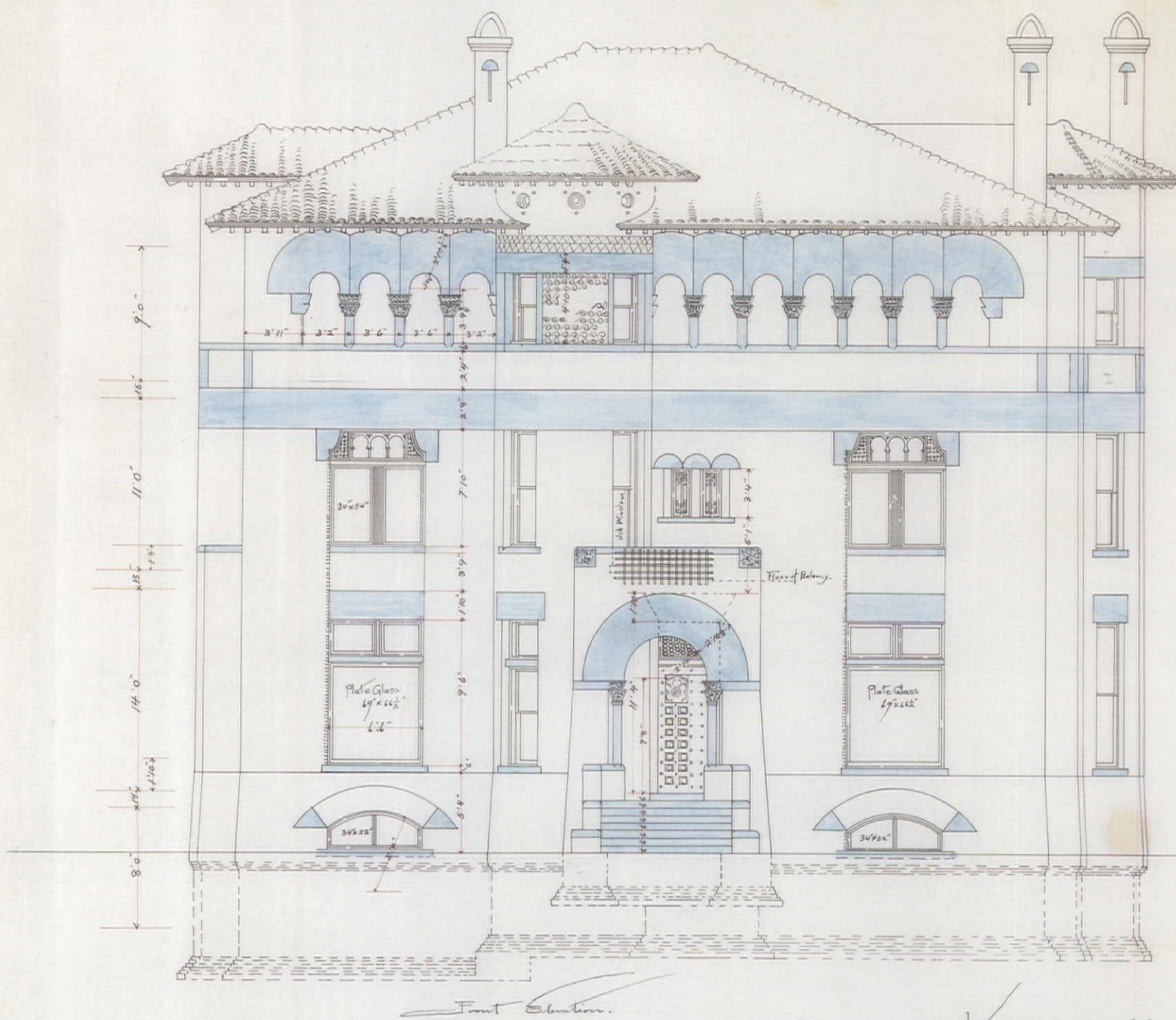
Nothing seems to get the juices of architects flowing more freely, nor tempt them to break as many rules, as the idea of the house. For more than a hundred years, from the first experiments in open plan living to the latest adventures in lightweight dwellings and tiny houses, the modern home has been the testing ground for new ideas in architecture.

For some designers, that has been a matter of trying out ways to match the shape of buildings to new patterns of life. For others, houses have allowed them to test new structures, materials and systems with a freedom that is unimaginable in a public or commercial building, where design must meet the demands of a fixed program, the economics of tenancy, and a legion of clients, approvals and regulatory restrictions. Still others have found in the forgiving scale of the house and its inevitable relation to the landscape an opportunity for flights of fancy – to play with a formal notion or an improvisation, as Mozart would write a fantasy or Schubert an impromptu. But for all, the house has been an endless challenge to innovation and inspiration.

Like the chair, at which almost all great modern architects have tried their hand – thinking of new shapes to embrace the body as life and relaxed manners began to value comfort, and of new materials to mold those shapes with – the home has been constantly reconfigured to meet the changing habits of a household, and the patterns of leisure, work, and movement that it follows.

THE MANY WAYS TO BE MODERN

This issue of *architecturefor sale quarterly* looks at four masterly but very different examples of these experiments in modern living. The earliest is a Greene & Greene house that catered to the growing informality of life in California at the dawn of the modern era, as the age of grand entry halls, nurseries, ballrooms and parlors gave way to an era in which well-to-do families lived with fewer servants, shared their living space with children, welcomed visitors to their everyday quarters, took their ease in company (rather than sitting on stiff backed chairs), and wandered through house and grounds, indoors and out, in the same clothes.



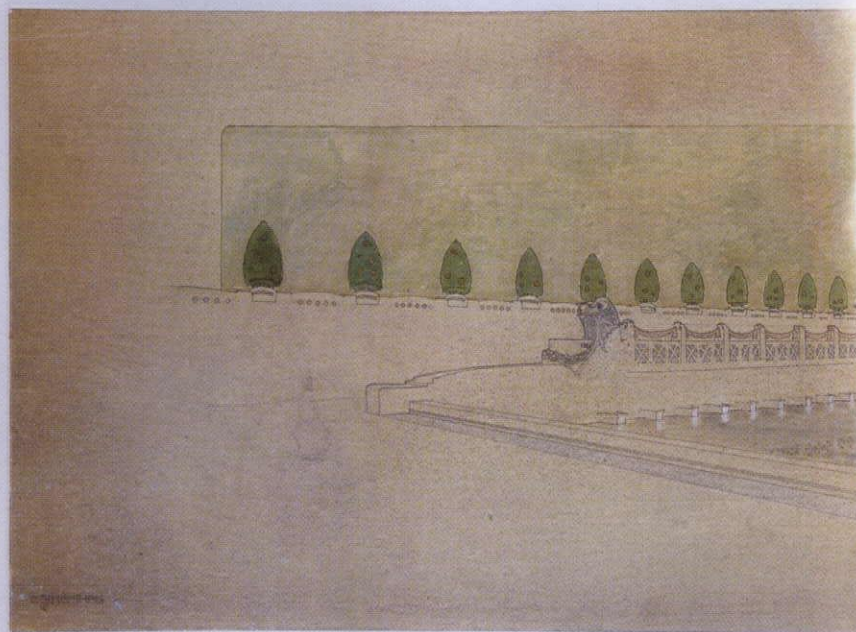
Residence for Mr. W. M. Wyeth St. Joseph, Mo.
Messrs. Eckel and Mann Architects 1889.

Scale — $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 inch = 1 foot.

Eckel and Mann, Wyeth House, St Joseph, Missouri, 1889

One was built as the Baby Boom ended among a cluster of middle class homes by Richard Neutra that – in the age of *La Dolce Vita*, *Playboy*, and *Ocean's Eleven* – began to weave into the studied compression and simplicity of the Modern house a new taste for what was then called 'sophistication,' a sense of refinement, permanence and modest luxury, in which the plan of the home began to spread more generously and to gently separate grown-up activities from family mayhem. Another, John Lautner's astonishing space-age Silvertop, sought an altogether new kind of serenity and grandeur, in which the house was shaped as a sort of observatory – a fantasia in which the house became a transcendent space for the enjoyment of changing light, distance, and vista, and the unchanging geometry of the universe. All were laboratories in the imagination of an ideal living space. All grow from the fertile social landscape of southern California. Yet none are remotely alike.

As time passes we begin to sort our built history into categories – like the 'Craftsman Bungalow' or the 'Mid-Century Modern House' – and I am sure we will soon be finding an equally useful term to embrace the ruggedly inventive live-work spaces of the '80s and '90s. But in classifying things that way, we are in danger of thinking about them as if they were cookies pressed through the same cutter and are then tempted to re-do and furnish them in some generic fashion that seems true to our ideas of what characterizes a style. What can get lost in that process is the distinctiveness, the idiosyncracies behind the work of great designers, and the very specific solutions they found for each client, moment and situation. This is not a matter of a signature feature – like a Wallace Neff arched window or a touch of Frank Gehry mesh – but their voices, their separate and even disparate ways of working, even with the same materials, in the same broad terms, and toward the same purpose.



Otto Schontal: Design for an artist's villa, Vienna, about 1899

There is as much variety in modern architecture, especially in its reinvention of the home, as in modern painting or modern music. Charles Greene is no closer to Irving Gill or Frank Lloyd Wright than Stravinsky is to Béla Bartók or Schoenberg. Lautner is no nearer Neutra than Rothko is to Pollock. We run the risk of neutralizing their works the moment we start to recast them from a common mold and then are caught short by the originality of the real thing, especially in those rare cases where every detail of the original design remains intact. As Barbara Lamprecht makes clear, this is not just a matter of differences between designers, but of decisive differences between their works, even when – as at Neutra's Kambara house – the building in question is both part of a unified group and the product of a standard system or 'kit of parts'. To stretch the musical analogy further, a masterly technique will ring endless variations even on a single theme.

THE EXPERIMENTAL HOUSE

Here, taken almost entirely from a private collection in London, we trace through drawings and models – the mind's eye of the architect – at four key points in time along this immensely varied experimental line. Some are solitary ventures into the realm of invention in which the design is governed by the specifics of a site and client, some are conceived as prototypes for a new house type, and yet others use the house to express an idea or explore a line of inquiry about the very shape and nature of architecture and its place in the landscape and culture.

The first comes at the dawn of the Twentieth Century as students in the Vienna school of Otto Wagner – establishing a modern tradition from which L.A.'s Rudolf Schindler and Richard Neutra derive – began to look at ways to simplify the suburban villa and, much as Wright and the Greenes were doing in this country, to bring it in closer sympathy with the ground and to raise the spirit of domestic life by giving homes a sculptural and ornamental program that had the same aspirations as a work of art. Homes now became places in which to enjoy the everyday rather than sites of ceremony and entertainment, and – as Mimi Zeiger shows – the aesthetics of an extravaganza like the Gamble or Blacker house could be readily translated to more modest homes in a way that the pomp of a Beaux Arts mansion could not. Perhaps the greatest step in

making us modern is this: that we might all live in ways that whatever the scale and cost would look roughly alike. There were many models for these experiments: the traditional Japanese house that was so important to the Pasadena school, the relaxed plan of the 'English house' emerging in the late Victorian era that so caught the imagination of the Germans, or the rural vernacular around them. In some ways the door to the modern home was opened by the adoption of exotic models, especially the looser domestic landscape of the Mediterranean and Arab lands that was making its way west to California. With its plate glass windows and Moorish decoration, Eckel and Mann's adventurous example of a magnate's villa in the Midwest (the territory from which the Greene brothers and their clients came) draws on Moorish traditions to propose something with none of the pretensions of European grandeur that the barons of Newport and Fifth Avenue demanded of their homes.

The next great burst of invention we look at comes from 1935 to 1940, as the Depression years eased and the automobile became part of our way of life. Building on isolated housing experiments of the 1920s – we can think of Schindler's King's Road House in Los Angeles, or Neutra's Lovell Health House – and often focusing on the moderate cost home, architects laid out a feast of new ideas for domestic architecture that proved to be the groundwork for the modern home of the postwar years. Some of the great examples – like Neutra's Von Sternberg house, built in thin gauge steel – have gone. Some, like Frank Lloyd Wright's All-Steel community for LA's Baldwin Hills, never got off the ground. Others were only developed as models – here is Ernest Born and Thomas Church's staggeringly original proposition for a new kind of small house and garden on a city lot, in which a tapered mezzanine begins life as a kitchen, and a dining room begins indoors and ends up as a garden bridge, and one entire high wall is glass. More, like the German Expressionist Herman Finsterlin's home (conceived as a cave or primitive animal in which shelter becomes a fluid, emotional or even tactile experience), were put forward simply as provocations and possibilities.

Two very real examples find new ways to deal with site. We are constantly rediscovering the great Swedish architect Gunnar Asplund, whose work, like Wright's but with less flamboyance, both embraces conventions and defies them with his own unorthodox originality. Here we see his summer home, neither modern nor



traditional, built on an island near Stockholm, as he draws it stepping quietly but asymmetrically down the slope of its hill, using a cliff as shelter, and finding its proportions in the landscape. High in the Malibu hills, Wright's transcendent 'Eaglefeather' for Arch Oboler (on which Lautner worked) takes a nearly identical topography in a much grander setting and thrusts itself boldly out from it so that, like Silvertop, it soars above the ground to make the vistas and skies around it sing. One experiments by deferring to its surroundings, the other by asserting itself to heighten their effect.

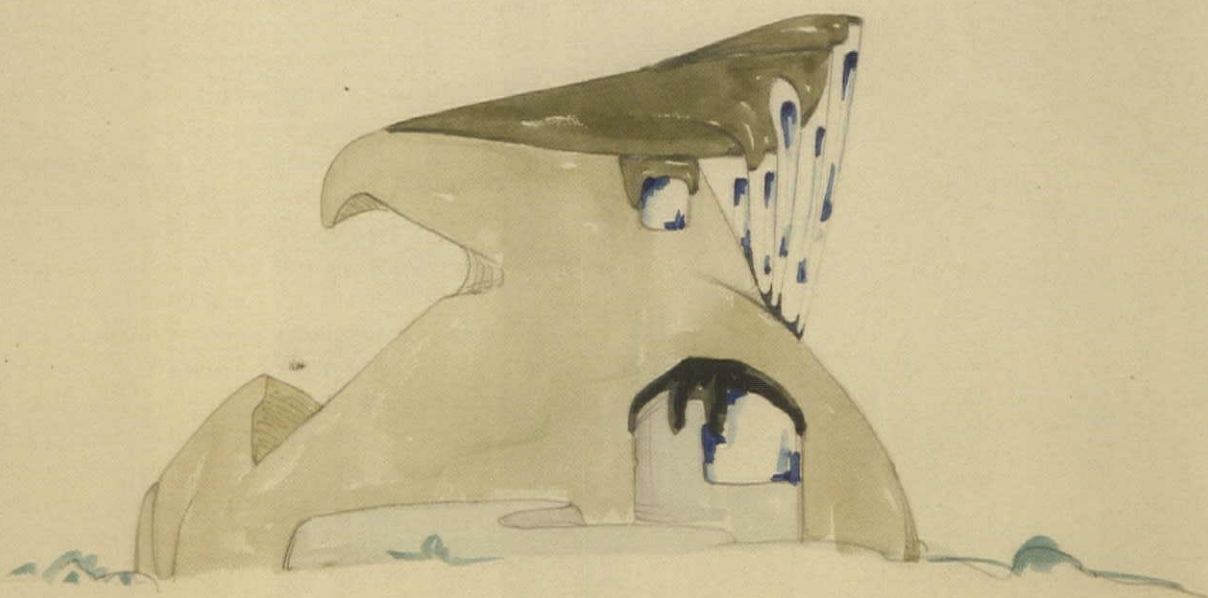
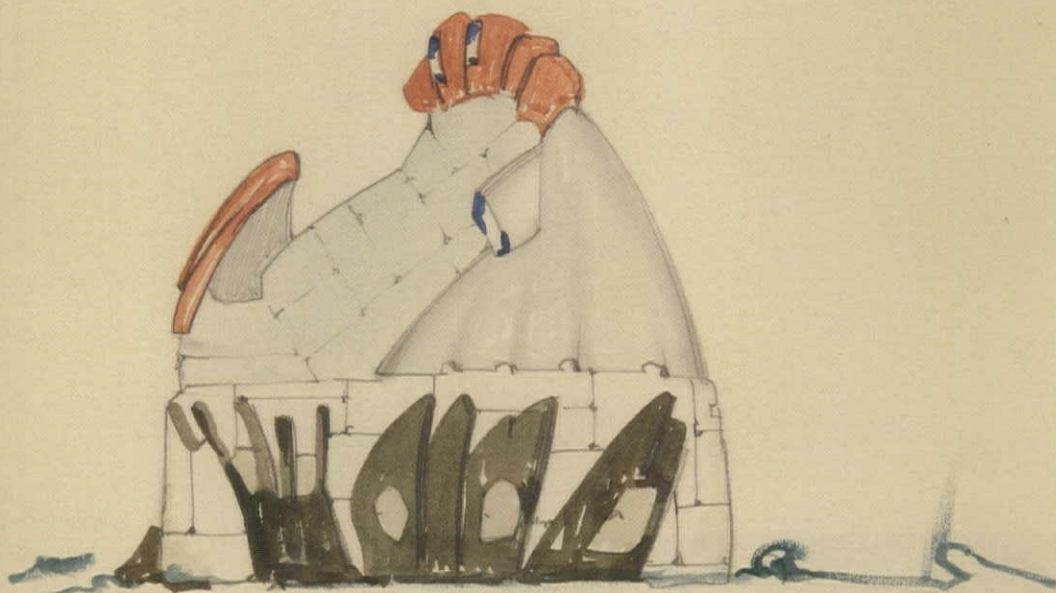
Our third moment starts as the rational and functional conventions of postwar modernism begin to give way – at the time of Silvertop and the Kambara house – first to the idea that the house

could exploit new structural systems (as at Silvertop) or to a new approach to light and site to establish the house as an emotive or transcendent space (as at Kambara). We see Le Corbusier using the roof of the first 'Unite d'Habitation' as a safely-enclosed community nursery, where children will explore the shapes and shadows of architecture and the distances beyond it. Lautner, in an unbuilt project for the artist Edgar Ewing, explores different ways – both radical – to raise the house above a steep hillside to blend shelter and vista. The French-Hungarian Antti Lovag proposes the home as an interlocking set of bubbles of varied size that serve as "space both for encounter and reflection," taking advantage of new materials that would make sculpted space a reality where Finsterlin could only imagine it.

Seite II.
Blatt 3.

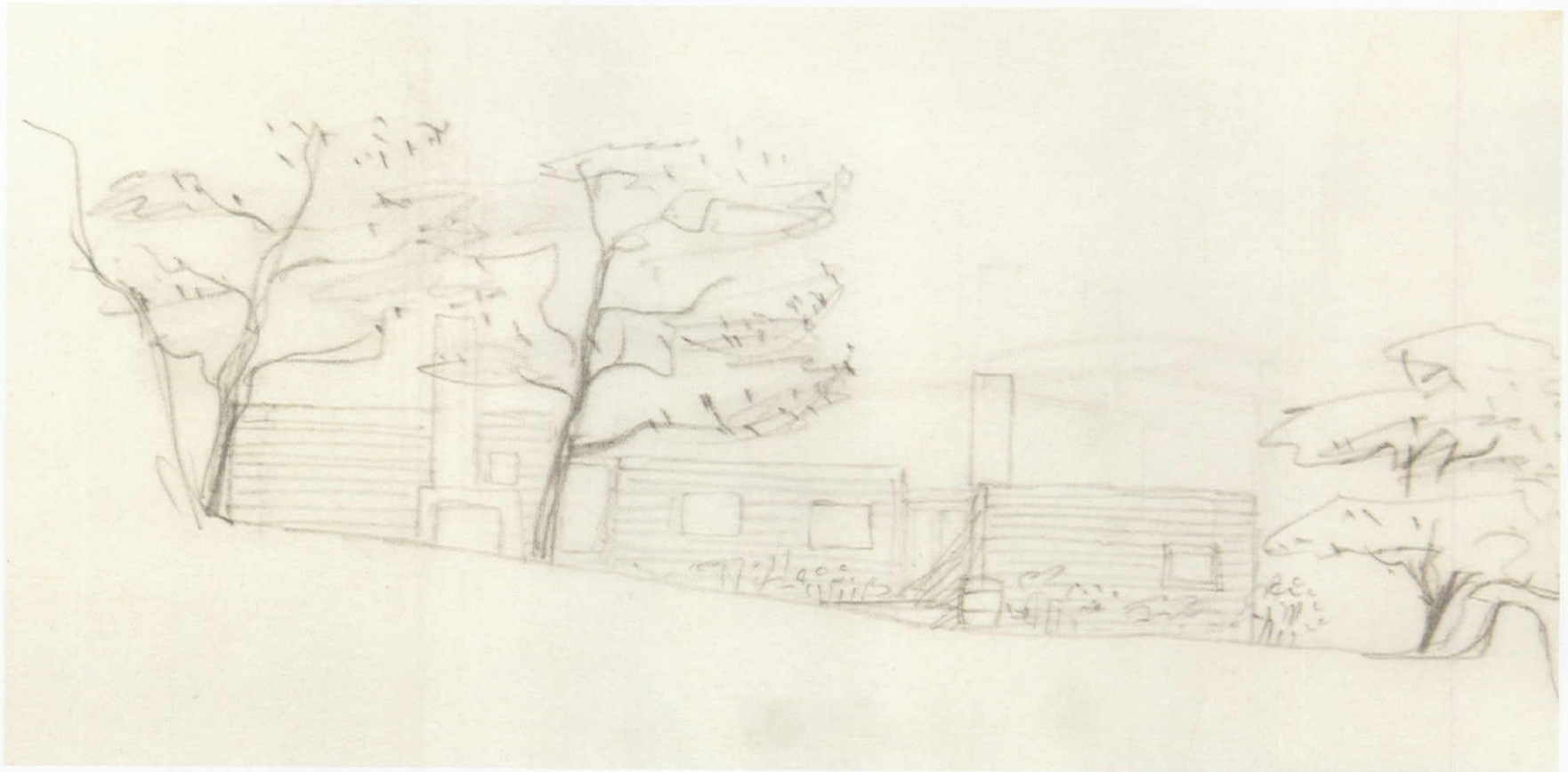
Das Haus die Fiedel eines
Rundbrüden als einseitigen
Bauwerk.

gewölbte Kuppelkuppel.
Beton auf Eisenbeton.
Zunehmende Eisenbeton und
Kuppelkuppel.

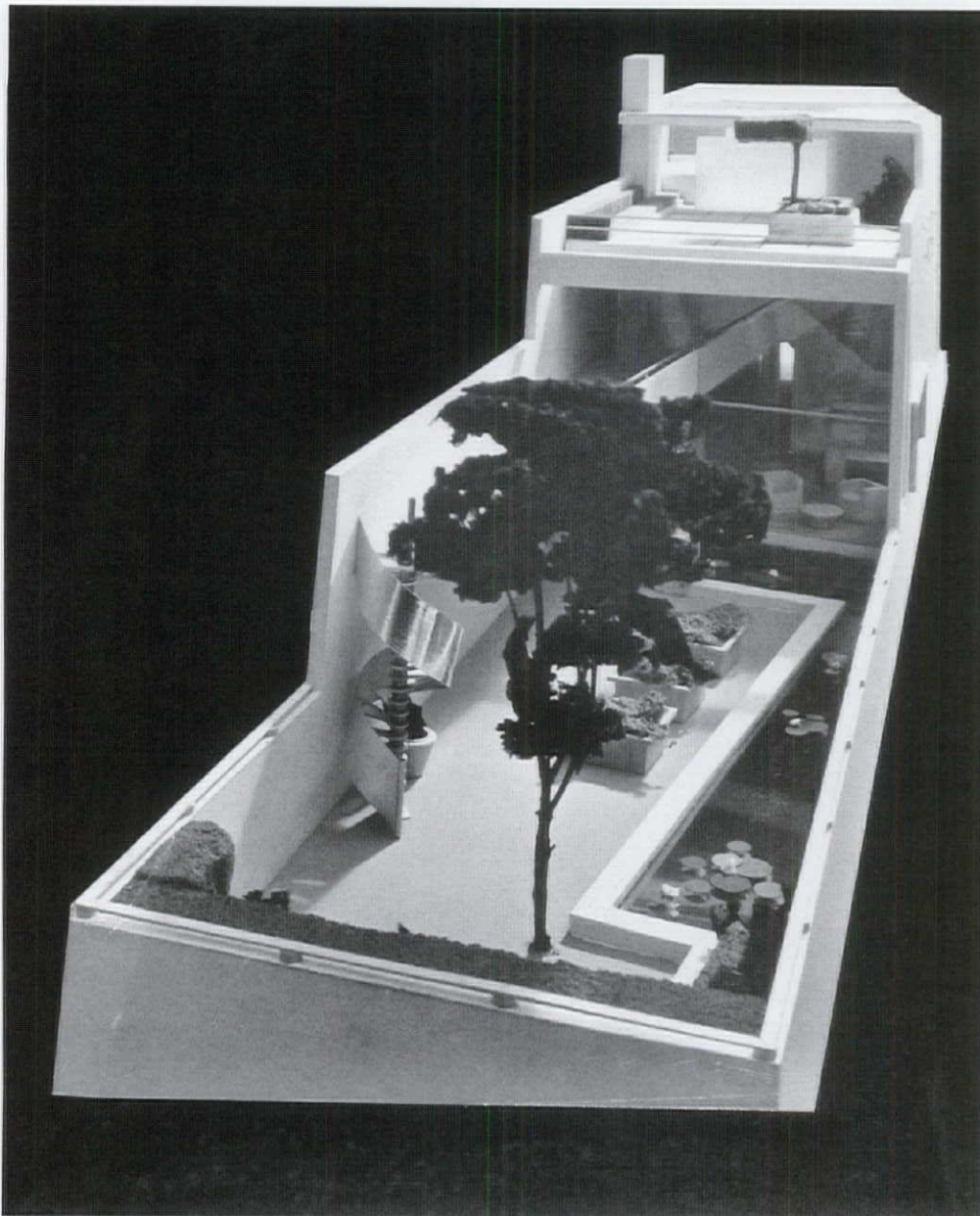


Kammerkuppel.
Fachstein.
geschicklicher Bau.

H. Finsterlin.

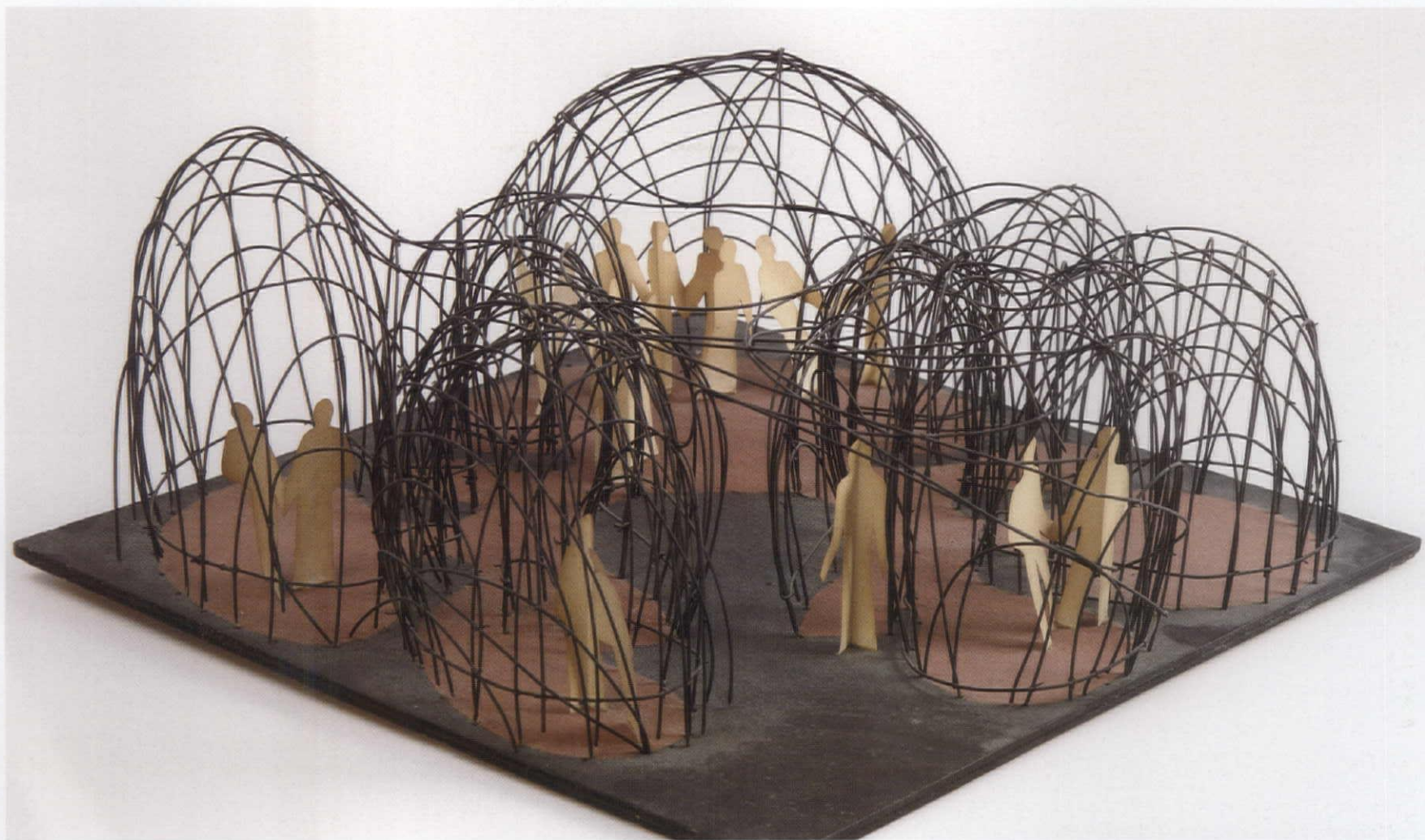


Erik Gunnar Asplund: Architect's summer home at Stennas, Stockholm, 1937

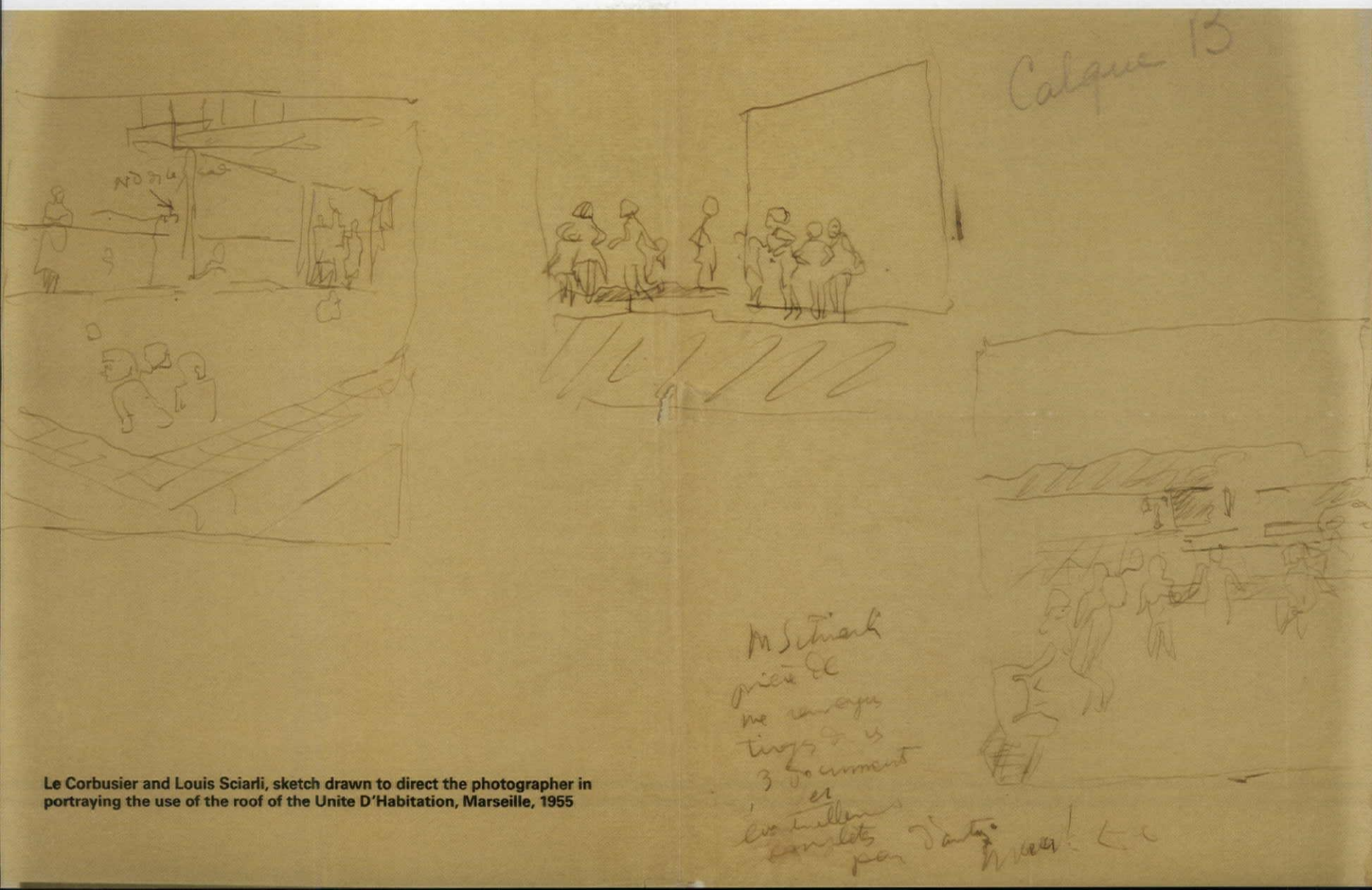


Ernest Born and Thomas Church, Model City House and Garden for a 25 foot lot, San Francisco, 1937

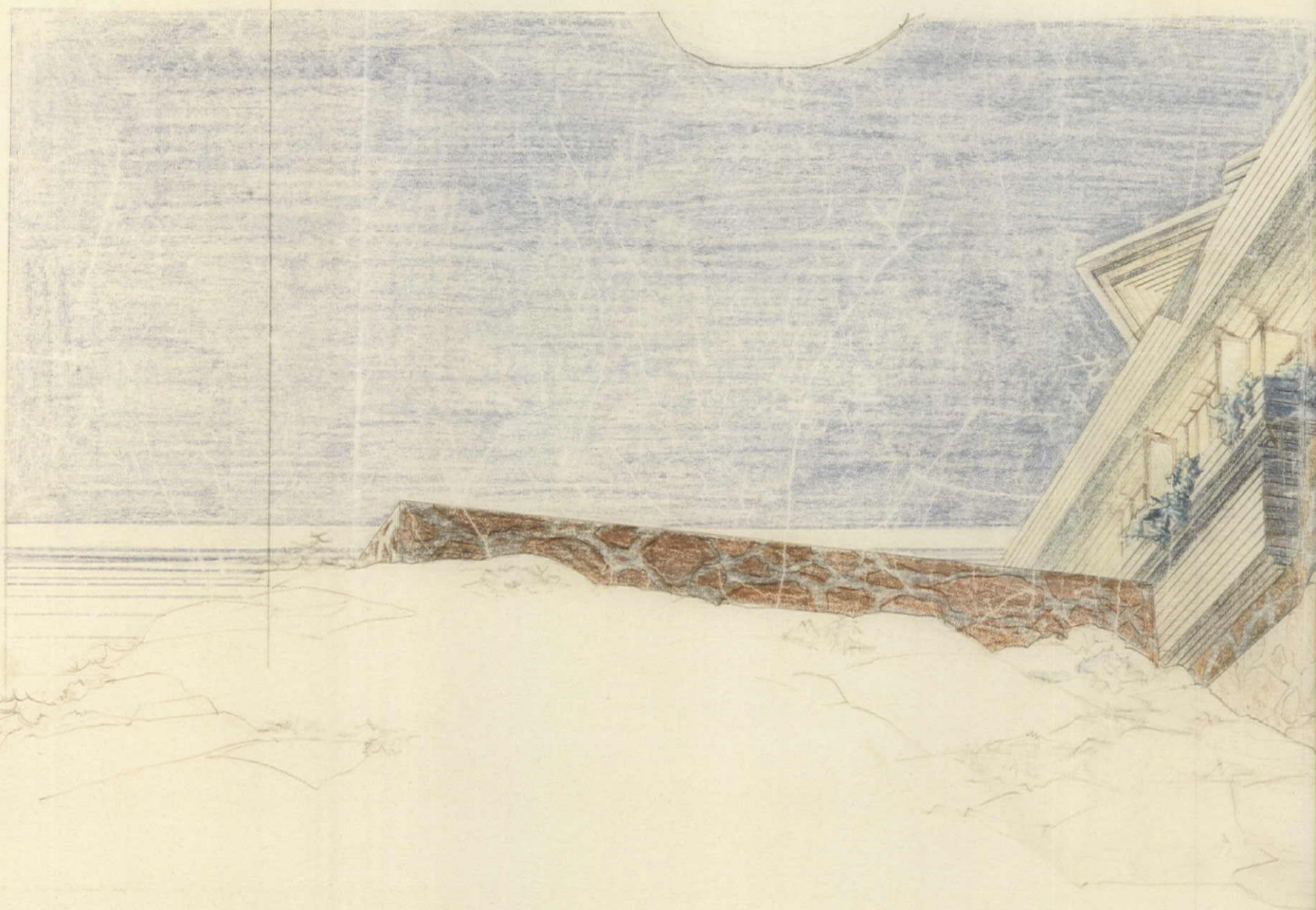
The last of these projects moves us a short step forward to a single year, 1972, with three projects that questioned some of the basic premises of the house. In John Hejduk's wall houses, he simply builds his own hillside, hanging the dwellings like bubbles on the side of a constructed escarpment. His Bye House, proposed for a client for a site in Connecticut and built thirty years later in the Netherlands, develops the idea for a single dwelling suspending the living space from a huge wall, bringing you into it through a long tunnel that makes the vista explode before you when you get there. Much has been written about Peter Eisenman's House 6, in which he follows a geometric procedure to shape a perfectly agreeable weekend dwelling by bisecting a cube to find its separations and divisions – walls, floors and openings, all determined by slicing through a hypothetical box. But it seems to me that the most important as an assertion of the independence and self-containment of the house is that it stands on its pad amidst a flat swath of greenery as a piece of sculpture sits in a garden, charging the space around it. Ugo La Pietra's prescient 'housing cell,' built for an exhibition at MoMA that year, suggests that in an electronic universe, the only home or space we need might be a sort of tent into which all the necessities and experience of the world around us can be brought by telephone. If he was right, then we don't need houses at all.



Antti Lovag, architect and 'habituologist': Model of a bubble house entitled 'space for encounter and reflection', Paris, 1968

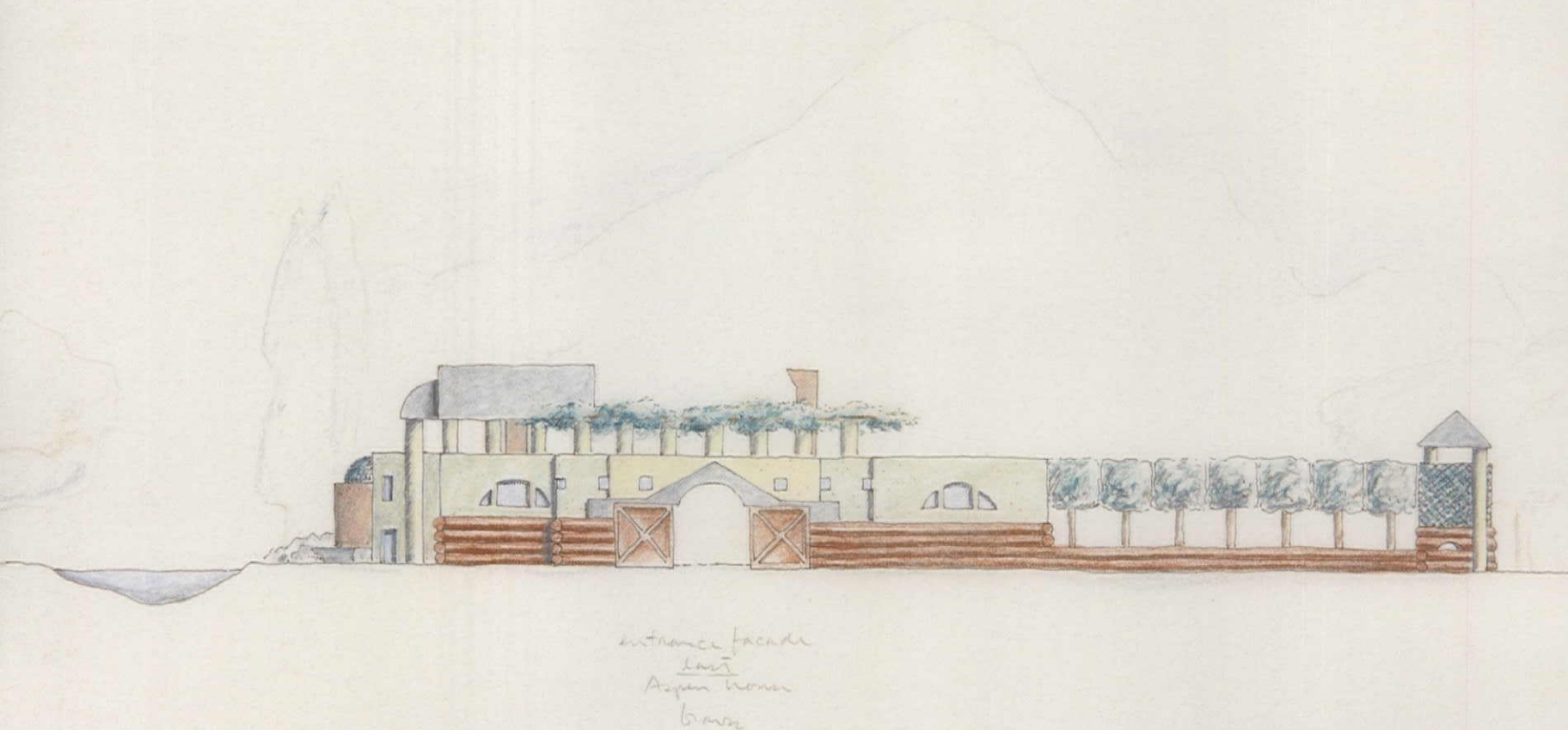


Le Corbusier and Louis Sciarli, sketch drawn to direct the photographer in portraying the use of the roof of the Unite D'Habitation, Marseille, 1955





Frank Lloyd Wright, "Eaglefeather," Malibu, 1940



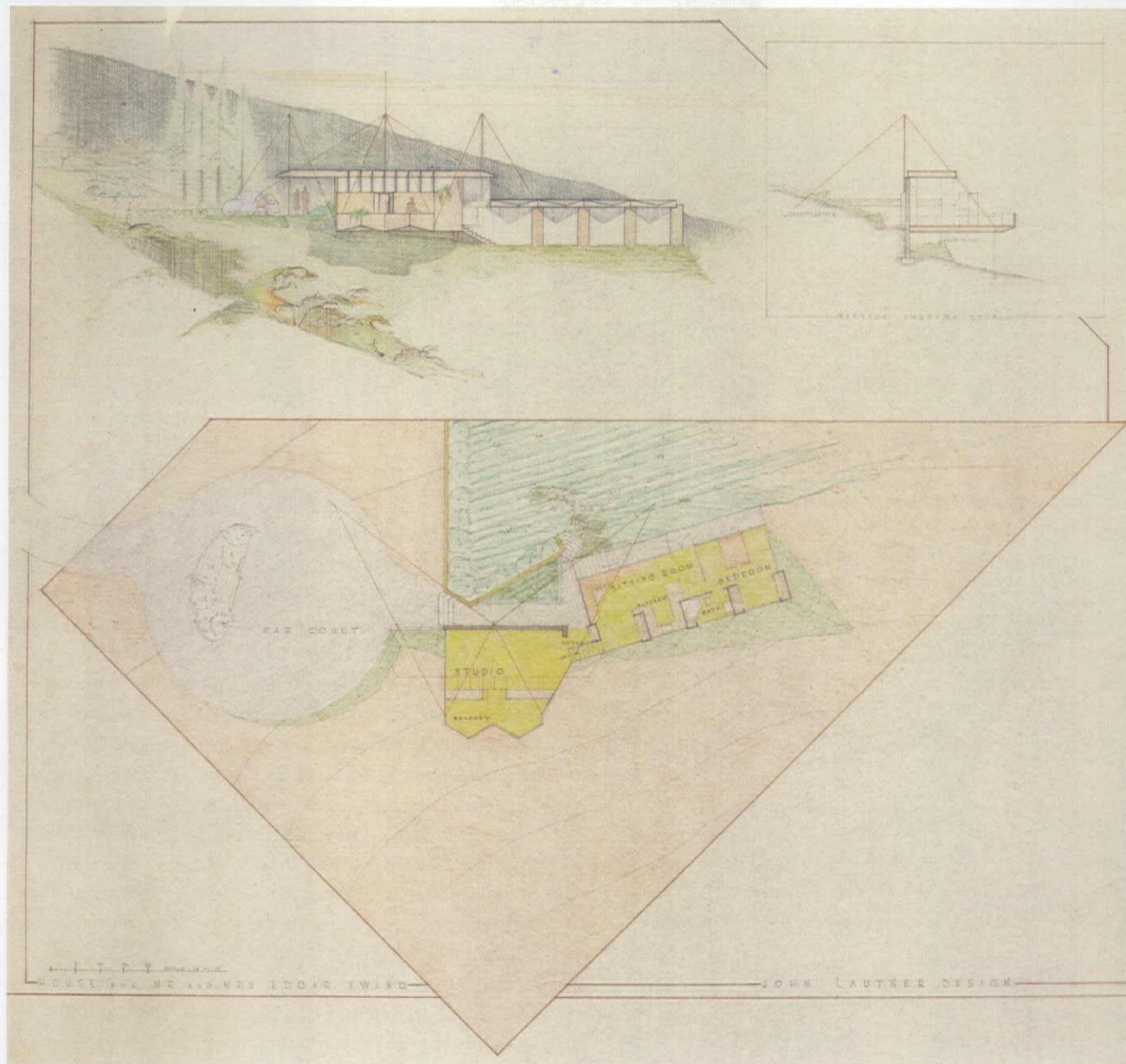
Michael Graves, New York, 1978: Aspen Villa

LOSS AND RECOVERY

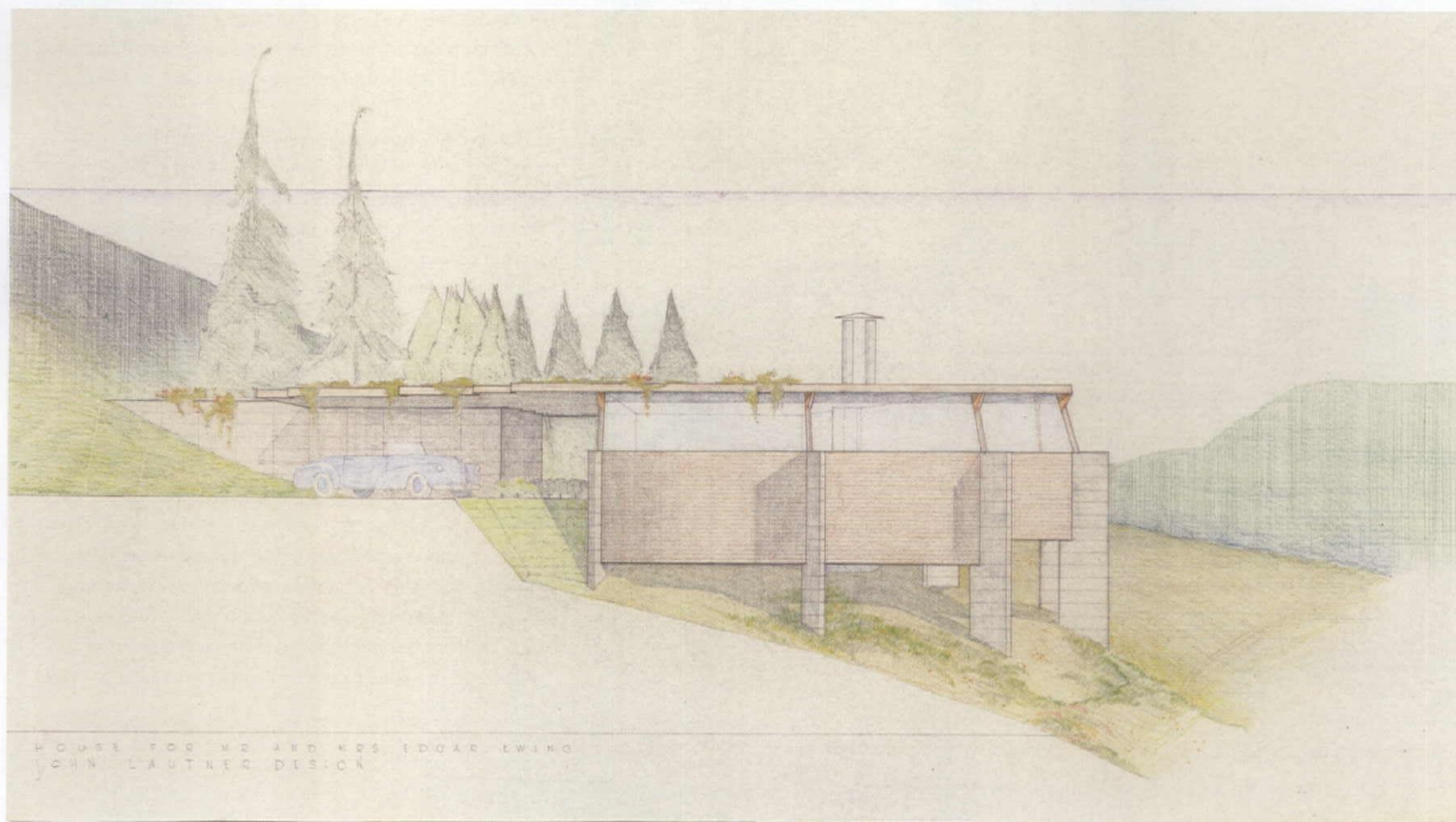
Architects have long memories, and experiments like these remain subjects for analysis in the design studios of schools and are continually revisited in the literature. So forty years later we see the molded shapes of the Expressionist house coming back in the fluid forms of Lautner, Lovag and Hejduk, or the early Modernist geometries of white cubes and straight lines being re-examined in their different fashion by Eisenman and Neutra. The first ventures into the 'post-Modern' looked back across an even longer history, reinventing the house with familiar building blocks – like the column and the arched window that architects through the ages would recognize – then assembling, simplifying and coloring them in quite unexpected proportions and relationships. In Michael Graves' house for Aspen, we can hear echoes of many earlier experiments in this portfolio: the modernized exoticism of that 1880s house in Missouri; the restrained luxury of those villas from turn of the century Vienna; and the subtle twists on conventional scale, placement and symmetry that marks Asplund's summer house. Graves uses classical columns, but they tower above the

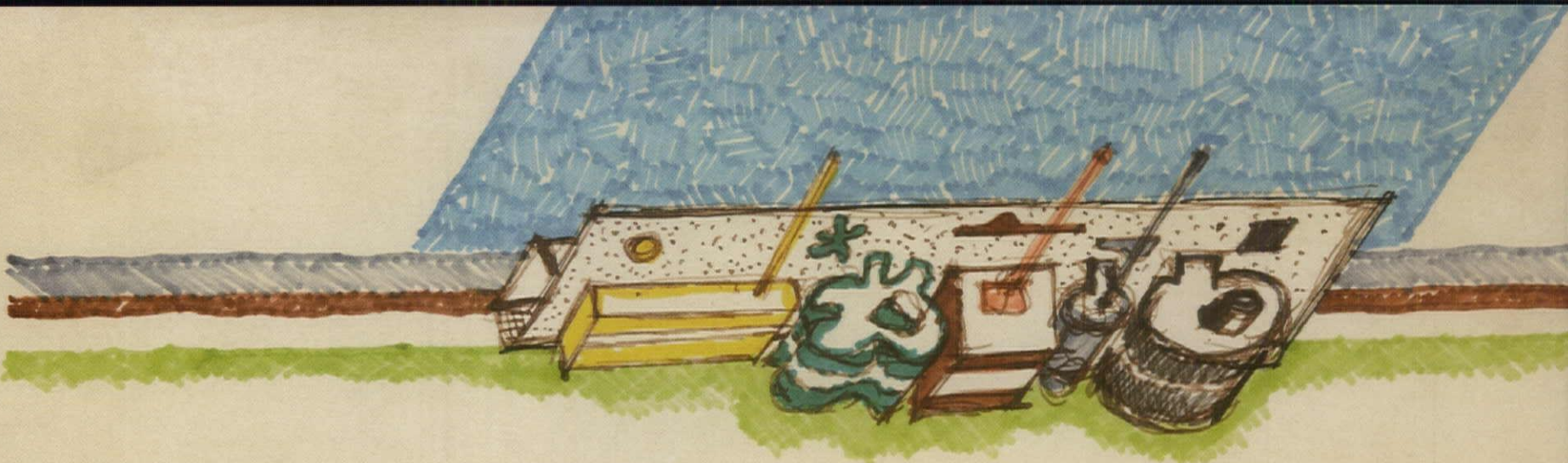
house rather than support it. A traditional pergola sits on the roof rather than the ground, and of two identical half-moon windows from the Renaissance, one of them is placed in the center of its wall and the other butts abruptly against a corner.

It takes great determination, an exceptional client and heroic patience to see any innovative house move from ideas on paper to a building on the ground. Wright's Eaglefeather was never finished. John Hejduk never lived to see one of his wall houses rise. Lautner never got to build his experiments in hillside living for the Ewings and had to wait until the Chemosphere to bring its ideas to fruition. The story of Silvertop is one of immense struggle, and John Hejduk never lived to see one of his wall houses rise. Yet the rare examples that make it – even those we know the best – are always and increasingly in danger. Experimenting with the application of industrially made components to a domestic landscape, it took the Eames more than five years to move their Case Study home and studio from a first design in 1945 to realization.

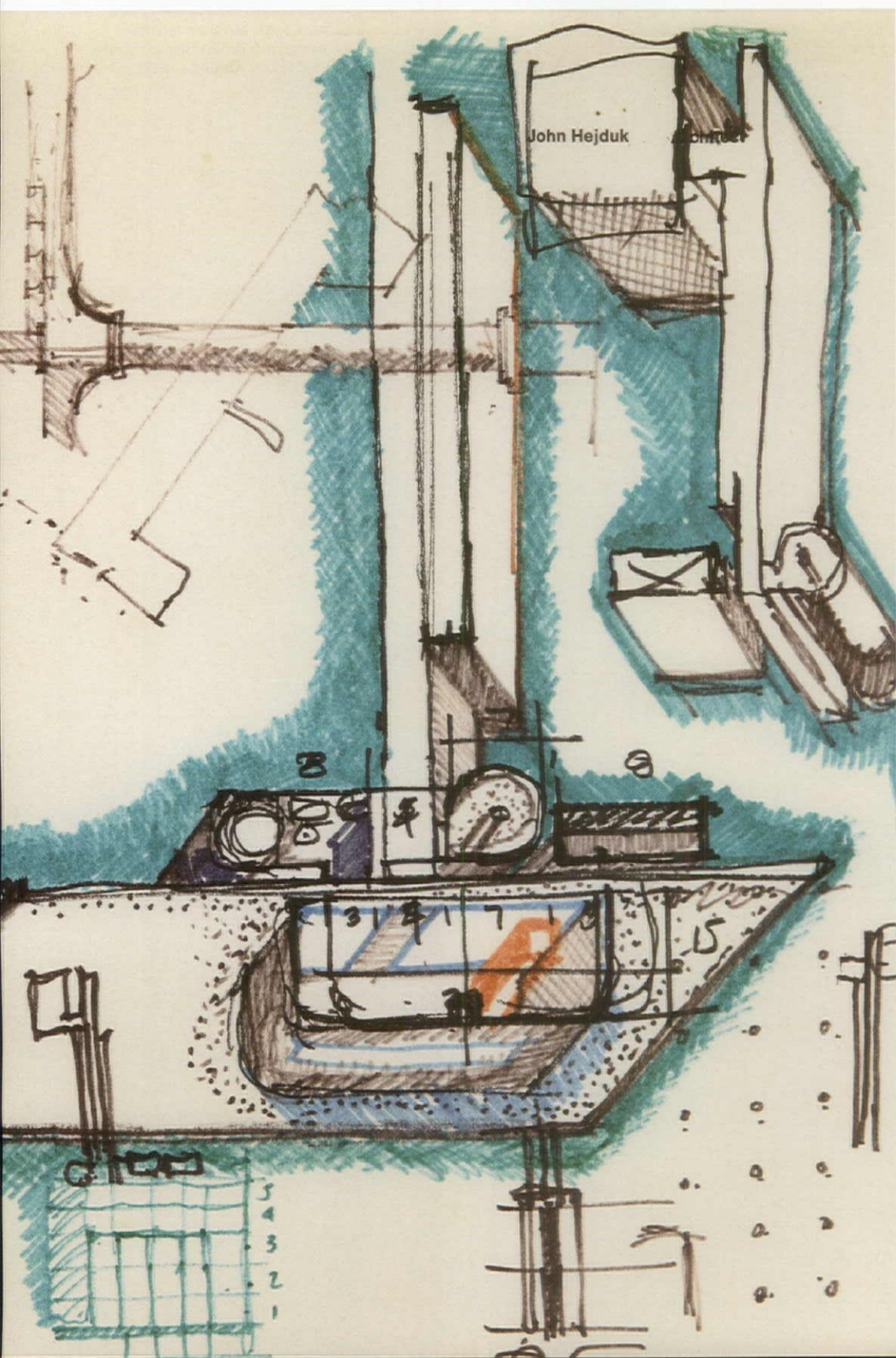


John Lautner,
Two proposals for Edgar
Ewing studio house, one
suspended from cables, one
for a semi-circular scheme
on narrow projecting concrete
struts, Los Angeles, 1952



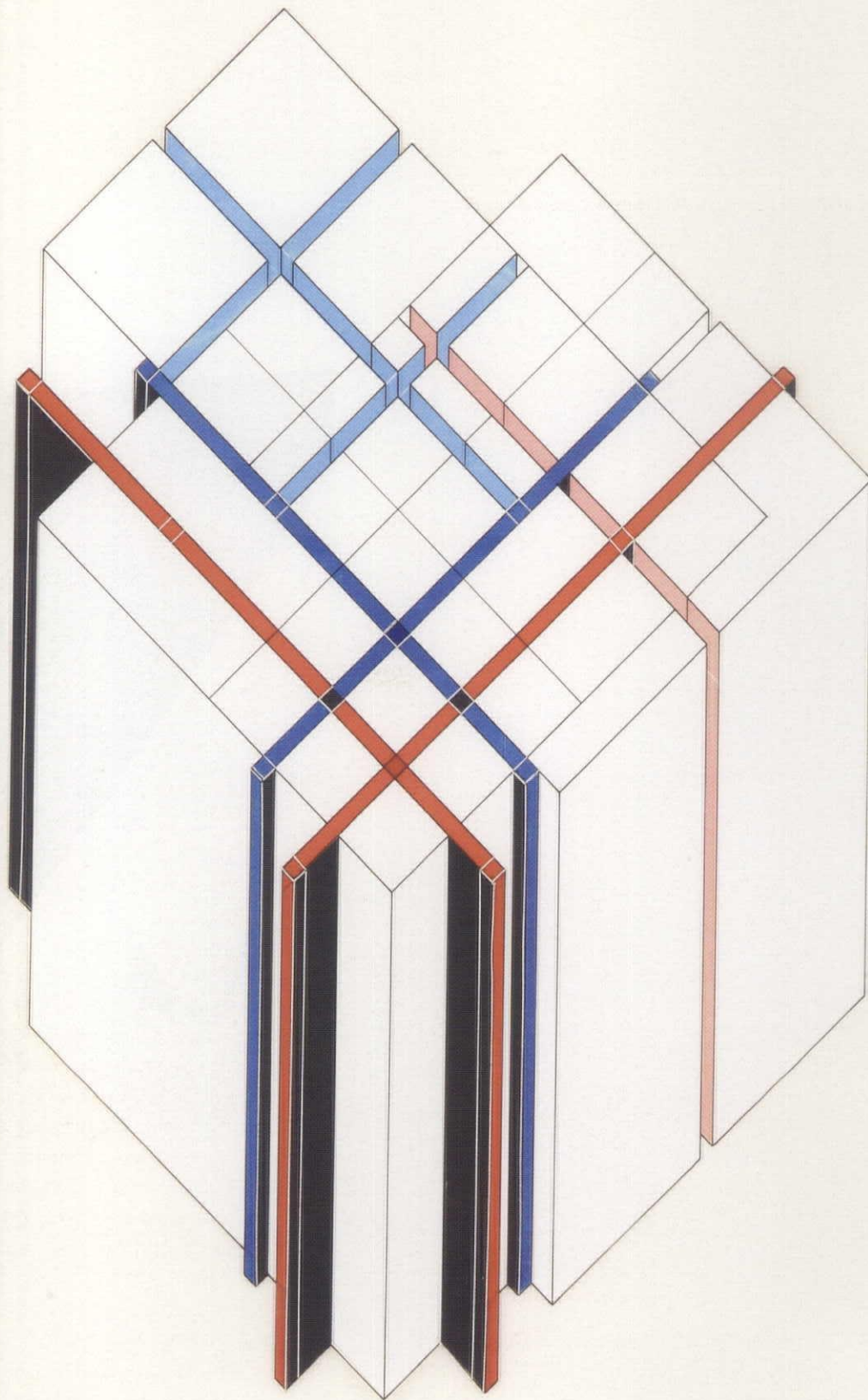


John Hejduk, Bye House Sketches and 'Fabrications: Wall Houses,' New York, 1972



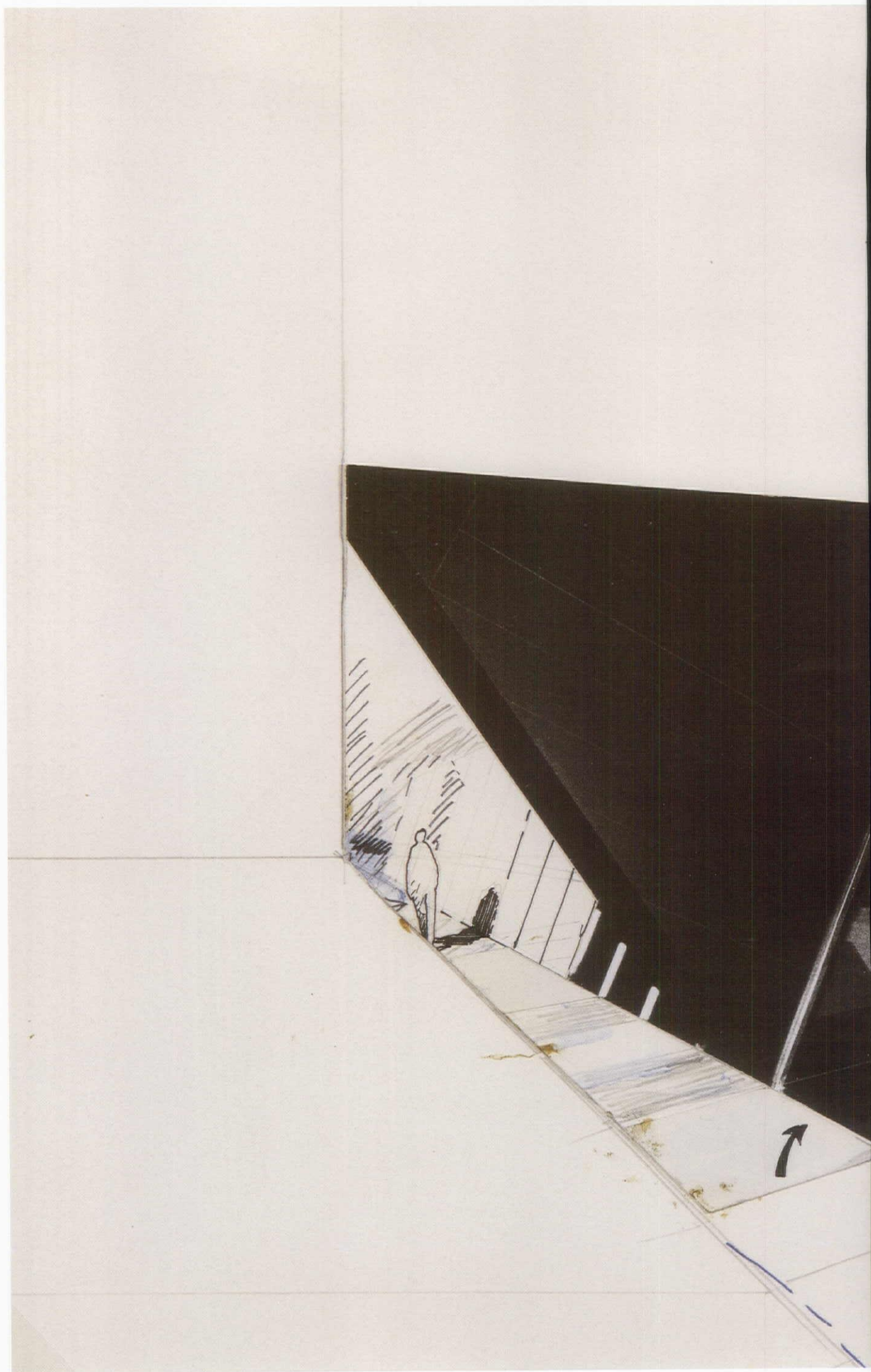
Among iconic experiments in living, we mourn the loss of Irving Gill's Dodge House in Hollywood and the demolition of Schindler's Wolfe complex on Catalina, John Johansen's Labyrinth house, and Arthur Erickson's pioneering Graham house in Vancouver. Other signal laboratory houses of our time – Eisenman's House 6 in Connecticut, Steven Holl's Stretto House in Dallas, and Robert Venturi's mother's house, to name only three – have recently changed hands for the first time. Others – like Wright's prototype of 'How to Live in the Southwest' for his son David – have been saved from the developer's wrecking ball by the bell. Others – like Harwell Harris' Havens House and Schindler's Freeman – languish in the care of universities. Even more fall victim to 'mid-century modernisation'. I have stood in too many once great houses whose moments of excitement have been swallowed up in a sort of off-the-shelf affection for a style rather than honored with an attempt to discern and respect what made the buildings adventurous or lent them drama. And once degraded – like Neutra's Kaufmann desert house – it takes vast resources and a heroic commitment to bring them back to life.

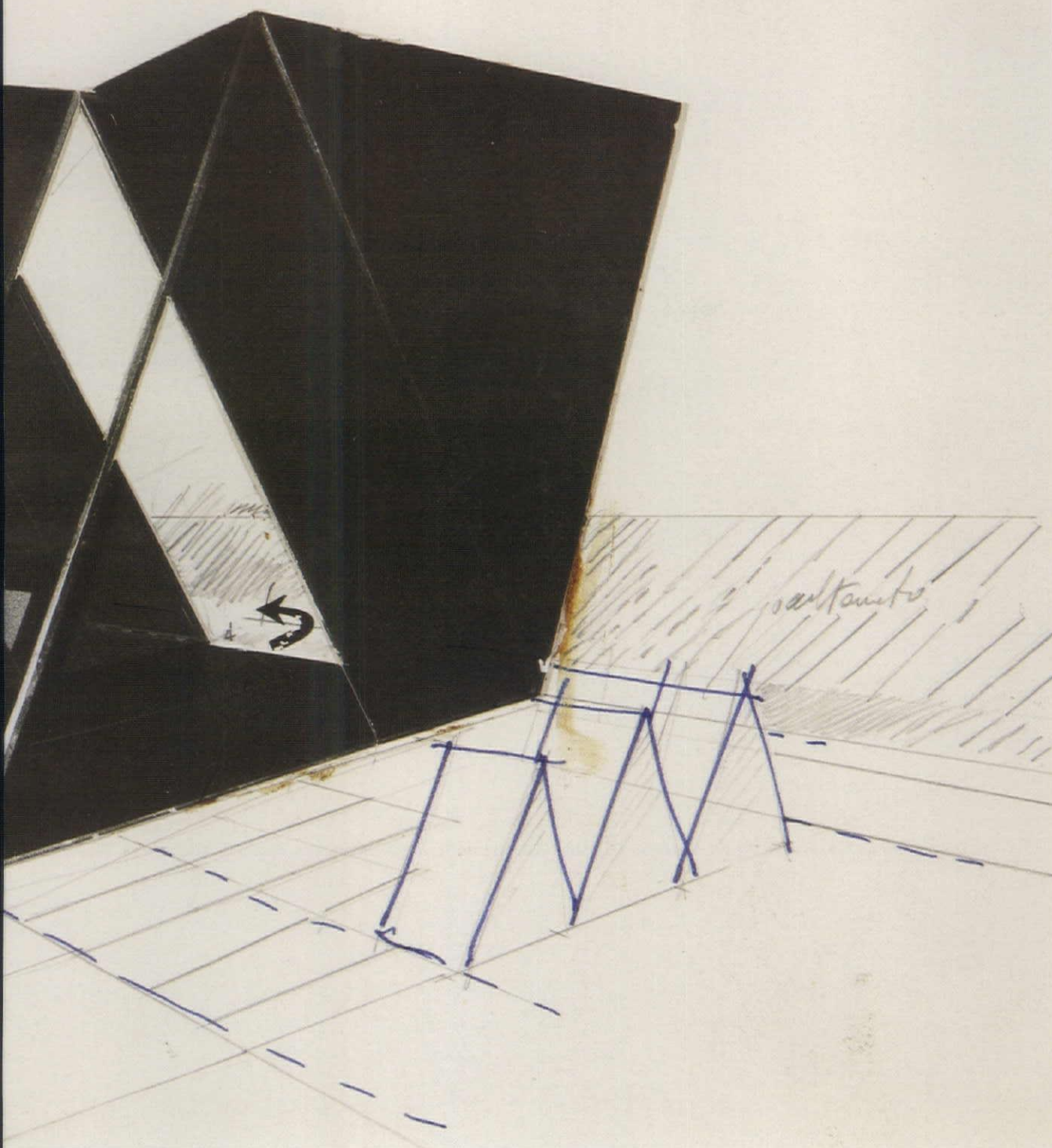
Yet not every house by even a great architect is a great adventure. We must acknowledge different levels of preservation, on a long scale, from the almost archeological approach that Escher Gunewardena are rightly taking at the Eames home and studio, to the subtle refinements and enlightening the same team have made to a Quincy Jones house whose good bones are made better by their intervention. In this magazine we have instances of all extremes – a Neutra in such an undisturbed state of preservation that its new owners will surely gain more delight from curating their living space than adapting it; a never quite completed as intended Lautner of such stunning importance and livability that it warrants as much fidelity to the designer's intent as its new owners can muster; and a Greene and Greene that, generous toward change from the start, is forgiving and resilient enough to repay its next owners handsomely so long as the spirit of the place and the time in which it was made is kept intact.



Peter Eisenman, From a sequence of collages showing the slicing of planes for House 6, New York, 1972

Ugo La Pietra, Collage drawing for a Habitation Cell for his 'Electronic City,' built for 'The New Italian Domestic Landscape,' Museum of Modern Art, New York, Milan, 1972





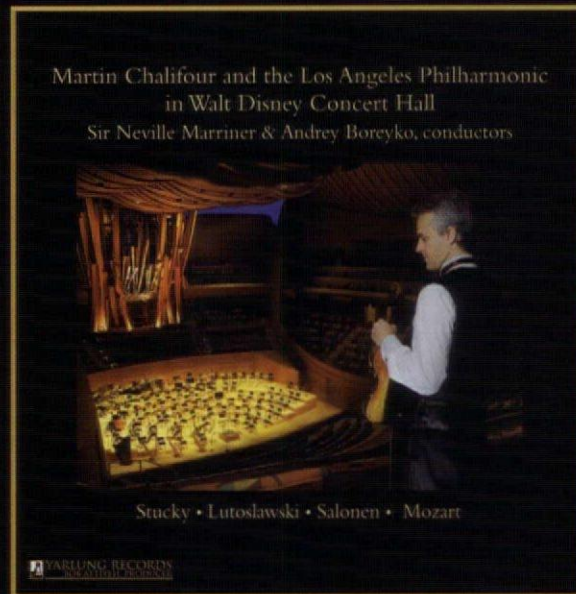
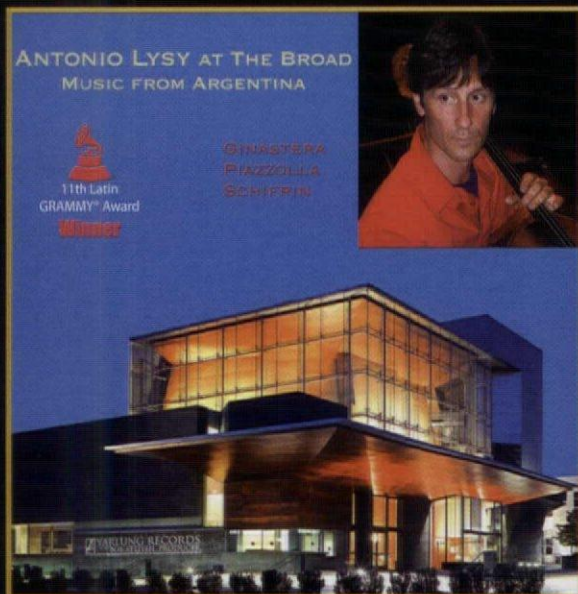
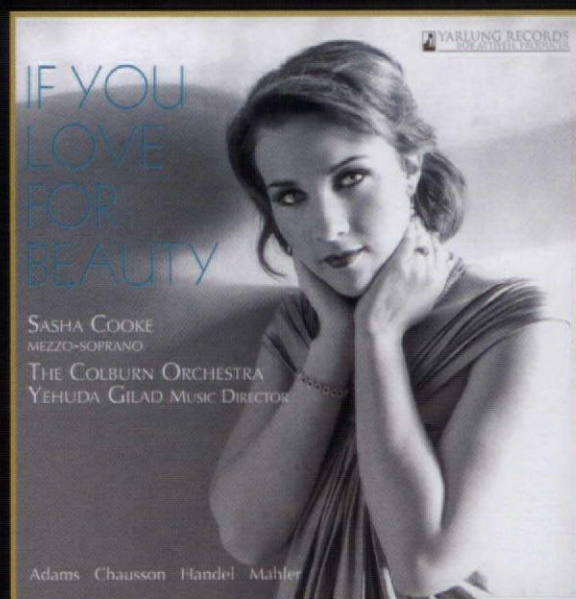
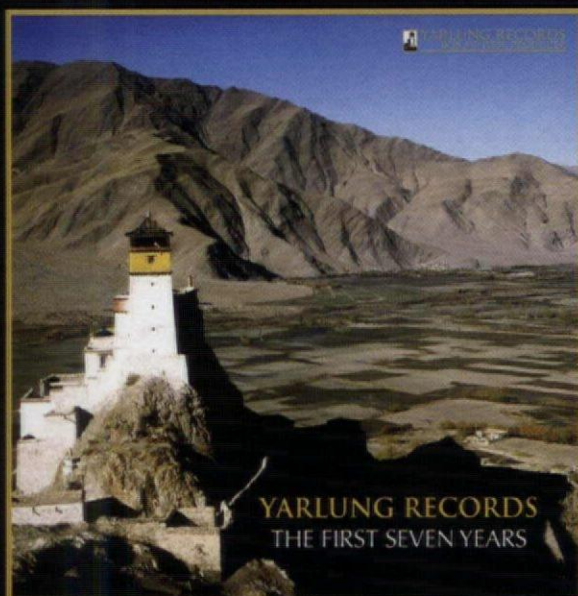


A. Quincy Jones, Tyre House, West Los Angeles, about 1960, restoration and revisions by EscherGunewardena, 2012



YARLUNG RECORDS

YOUNG • PROVOCATIVE • ENGAGING



Join us

Sponsor an album and underwrite our musical future

www.yarlungrecords.com





GREENE & GREENE, ARCHITECTS
ADAPTATION AND PERSEVERANCE



BOLTON/CULBERTSON HOUSE — MIMI ZEIGER

The Bolton/Culbertson House in Pasadena wears its more than 100-year history well. Located on West Del Mar Boulevard, just off Millionaires Row, the stately Craftsman bungalow seems to defy time. A herringbone brick path cuts through a trim lawn to a welcoming porch. A wide cedar door, detailed with teak insets and a stained glass window by former Tiffany Studios artisan Emil Lange, seems ready to yawn open and embrace visitors. Arcing boughs of blue cedars complete the Arts and Crafts composition.

The home, built for a doctor, is modest when compared to its neighbors. Indeed, this is the neighborhood where, in the early part of the last century, barons of industry who seasonally flocked to Southern California from the Midwest and parts further east built their mansions along Orange Grove Boulevard. The more liberal community of the Arroyo Seco attracted not only magnates, but also architects such as Charles and Henry Greene. Here the sun-drenched West loosened mannered societal constraints.

Pasadena, nestled in the hills above the budding City of Los Angeles, promised much of what we think of as typically West Coast: healthy living, freedom, and a beautiful environment. Indeed, these very lifestyle ideas parallel the beliefs of the American Arts and Crafts movement and Greene & Greene, its chief California practitioners.

It is also a place that has seen first hand the cultural changes of the century, the cyclical booms, declines, and renewals of urban history. Throughout those years, the integrity of the architect's design for Bolton/Culbertson house survived, and even thrived, in the face of miscalculated good intentions.

The tale of the Bolton/Culbertson House, designed by Greene & Greene, with an addition by architect Garrett Van Pelt in 1929, is however, less a story of perfect preservation, a residence frozen in period condition like a fly caught in amber, and more a lesson in how time passes through the living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and hallways of everyday life. The Greene brothers' designs are touted as exercises in livability. True to the Arts and Crafts tradition, they shunned the formal pomp of Beaux Arts estates and the bourgeois consumption of Victorian townhouses and aimed for comfort and joyful living. Their attention to the scale of spaces and the craft of even the smallest details gives their architecture a sense of warmth. More than a century later, the integrity of their vision has been maintained over the course of the Bolton/Culbertson history, even as the 5,725-square-foot home has seen several additions and renovations. Although the individual modifications are fairly discreet, each is often tied to cultural changes in how we live: a modern bathroom, a bay window, or a family-minded kitchen.



The story of the house begins in 1906 when Pasadena physician Dr. William T. Bolton commissioned Greene & Greene to design a home for himself, his wife Alice and his three children. The architects had built an earlier home for Bolton in 1899, a tightly packed, two-story Dutch Colonial Style structure (now demolished and site unknown) that bears no hint of the more expressive bungalows to come. The new commission represented an opportunity to develop and extend what would become their signature style.

The Bolton/Culbertson House just predates the Gamble House, Greene & Greene's 1908 masterwork. According to the National Register of Historic Places application filed in 1979, the project was a mid-range commission (as opposed to the more extravagant Gamble House) costing approximately \$11,000 at the time, yet it faithfully embodies the architects' adherence and extension of Craftsman principles. In his 1909 treatise, *The Craftsman Idea*, Gustav Stickley laid out the fundamentals: honesty, simplicity, and usefulness.

"A house should be the outward and visible expression of the life, work and thought of its inmates," wrote Stickley in an essay on the living room. "In its planning and furnishing, the station in life of its owner should be expressed in a dignified manner, not disguised." In the hands of the Greene brothers, these ideals took form with an

emphasis on structure, a philosophy taken from their interest in Japanese architecture – expressive natural materials instead of the machine-made decoration seen in Victorian homes, and a straightforward flow of interior and exterior spaces.

In photographs of the street façade from the time of construction, we see a shingled, two-story residence sheltered by a broad single gable roof. True to principles of honesty, window openings are placed to respond to the interior spaces—generous casements for the master bedroom, long and narrow lights for the service stairs, and a bay window designed to bring daylight into the grand stair. Inside the Port Orford cedar paneled front hall, the stair epitomizes the Greene's architecture. Its sculptural beauty comes from the treatment of material itself and the refined, but not fussy, joinery of the banister and risers, including wooden details such as the square ebony pegs often found in the later, more elaborate bungalows. Quarter-sawn tiger oak floors flow from room to room, leading the eye from the hall to rear porch and to the sweep of windows overlooking the garden beyond.

Bolton, unfortunately, did not live to see his home completed. He passed away in 1907 and his wife Alice rented the house to Mrs. Belle Barlow Bush and Beatrice Bush. Much of the furniture built specifically for the house by master builder Peter Hall was



commissioned by Mrs. Bush, and it adheres to Stickley's precepts. The extent that the Arts and Crafts philosophy carries through every aspect of life—European counterparts of the Arts and Crafts movement would call this *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total synthesis of art, craft, and life—can be seen in a mantel clock designed during that period. The wooden clock face is simply articulated with numerals and a small swarm of twelve bees carved into the surface – an allegory for keeping busy as a bee or that time flies?

Mrs. Bolton returned to the house in 1915, and not long after the property was sold to the Culbertson sisters: Cordelia, Kate, and Margaret, who moved from their Greene & Greene designed house on Hillcrest Avenue in Pasadena. The Culbertson house, a low-slung residence with a U-shaped plan is considered one of the architect's masterworks for its sculptural integration of decorative motifs – rendered not in their iconic wood, but rather in marble and plaster – throughout the living spaces. The lavish attention to detail, however, came at a steep price. In his history *Greene & Greene: Architecture as a Fine Art*, former curator of the Gamble House Randell L. Makinson suggests that the sisters were alarmed at the cost of the project and decided the house was too big for them, leading to the purchase of the Bolton/Culbertson House in 1917.

In spite of tightening belts, the Culbertson sisters made minor modifications over the next decade: new bathroom fixtures, a sunroom. Some of these adjustments are thought to be the



handiwork of Henry Greene, although no designer is listed in the building permits, and reflect a family settling in and customizing the space to fit their needs. The most fundamental change to the residence came in 1929 when the Culbertsons commissioned architect Garrett Van Pelt to create a more elaborate bay window on the north façade.

Van Pelt, an established Pasadena architect at the time, completed the historic, Spanish Colonial-style Villa Verde estate not long before this project. While early work with partners Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury includes Craftsman bungalows, European and Mexican influences characterize his later designs. The five-light bay window for the Culbertsons represents not only changing architectural tastes, but also a transition within the architect's own vocabulary.

In practical terms, Van Pelt's bay window addition (constructed by Peter Hall) was designed to accommodate an expanded ground floor powder room for the sisters. A 1994 article on the Bolton/Culbertson House in the Pasadena Star News describes the renovation. "The grand powder room features the original one-legged sink and built-in cabinet with purse and glove drawers. Art Nouveau-styled glass is inset in the door and window of the water closet," writes Stan Wawer, offering insight into private, domestic rituals of women at the brink of the Great Depression. The next major improvement came in 1935 with the installation of an Otis Elevator (still in working order).

For his story, Wawer interviewed then-owner Kathy Martin, who suggested that Kate Culbertson, by then in her late seventies, needed the elevator because she had trouble with the stairs.

Kathy passed away in 1942. Members of her family remained in the house until the early Fifties—a decade unkind to the Bolton/Culbertson House. Two different sets of owners, first Walter and Loretta Dickson and later, Henry and Barbara Hutchens, undertook renovations that drastically altered the interiors. In the living room, for example, the Greene's signature deep box beams – articulations of the structure and pivotal for delineating the space around the hearth – were removed and a canvas ceiling installed, a change that only further degraded the original design. In 1918, the Greene & Greene mantelpiece was removed and a Tudor style mantel was drilled into the Greuby tile.

The renovated 1950s kitchen, however, reflected a societal shift in family life. Once the place of servants, the kitchen, now automated and packed with appliances, became essential to the daily rhythms of Postwar life. Its design reflected the rise of "the West" in the cultural imagination, and not necessarily the pioneer utopia of The Craftsman. Tim Andersen, the architect responsible for the renovation in 1980 that returned the Arts and Craft vision to the house, describes the fifties-era kitchen he found intact (complete with pleated copper hoods over the stove) as "Chuckwagon Moderne."





Although the service kitchen and pantry areas were gutted, two original nickel-plated sinks were preserved and still remain in place.

By the 1960s, the taste for old homes had diminished and the large manses along Millionaires Row, once the gems of Pasadena, had fallen out of taste. Modern, efficient, and suburban tendencies fueled the city's outward expansion, leaving its old town to stagnate and decline. In 1968, nearby Ambassador College acquired the property and used the house as a book depository. Plans to convert the house into a school dormitory surfaced, but were never implemented. However ignoble it was for Greene & Greene's cedar-lined halls, airy bedrooms and sleeping porches to be turned into storerooms, the act may have actually helped preserve the house while other homes fell to ambitious designers wanting to modernize, or alas, were simply demolished.

Andersen was brought on as the architect and commissioned to renovate and restore the Bolton/Culbertson in 1979, when Kenneth Mead purchased the house from the college. The next year it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Andersen painstakingly brought the Bolton/Culbertson House back to its former glory, restoring wood finishes, plasterwork, and paint colors – wherever the originals were intact – and rebuilding elements such as box beams, the sunroom, kitchen cabinetry, and light fixtures to match the Greenes' aims. "I practice like a cultural anthropologist," says Andersen, looking back on the project. "When changes to the house seemed less appropriate we would look for models in the existing houses to work from and then integrate the design back to original intentions."

He's quick to point out that the house, even with its fine woodworking and rich joinery, was not a particularly fancy house for its time. Yet for the young architect restoring the house there was a desire to raise the interiors to the refined level of one of the Greenes'







wealthier clients. In the living room, for instance, he created a new copper mantelpiece header with trailing vine motif to cover the holes in the tile. The idea had come from a fireplace detail in Charles Greene's own house. Today, he reflects with a preservationist's eye, and wishes he had taken a simpler approach. "We were all so enamored with the Greenes we wanted to do more. In our enthusiasm we over-embellished."

The rescue of the residence from its fate as a fancy storage facility wasn't a fluke; it came with the growth of the preservationist effort in Southern California and a revival of the multi-faceted ambitions of the Arts and Crafts movement. Parallel principles such as a celebration of craftsmanship and materiality went hand in hand with burgeoning interest in environmentalism and back-to-the-land practices in the Seventies. Andersen was one of a number of architects, builders, and historians who, with the Gamble House as their home base, unearthed drawings, studied construction details, and

immersed themselves in the lore of the Greenes and the significant heritage of the structures in Pasadena. Earlier, in 1974, Andersen, with Pasadena Art Museum's trailblazing curator Eudorah M. Moore, produced the exhibition and catalog *California Design 1910*, documenting the West Coast's Arts and Craft contributions. "The 1970s seemed like a reflective decade of the 1910 period," he explains. "People were dissatisfied of the consumer culture paradigm." Today there is a continued interest in the legacy of living in a renewed way. To wit, this past September and October, the art collective Machine Project took over The Gamble House and for two weeks transformed the historic abode into a renewed place of experimental art, dance, and performance. Perhaps the greatest lesson of the Greenes' designs, however, is that their houses adapt and persevere, exhibiting sturdiness and beauty that transcends any trendy updates or failures in stewardship. As such, a century after its construction the Bolton/Culbertson House is very much a product of its time and a timeless place to call home.





370 West Del Mar Boulevard – Pasadena



6



7



2



N

Details & Information at: craftsmanmasterpiece.com



ALMA ALLEN

January 10 - February 28, 2015

BLUM & POE

2727 S. La Cienega Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90034 T: 310-836-2062 F: 310-836-2104 blumandpoe.com



The photograph captures the exterior of the Silvertop building during the 'blue hour'. The building's design is characterized by a prominent, curved glass facade that reflects the twilight sky and the silhouettes of nearby trees. Above the glass, a series of white, scalloped concrete arches form a decorative canopy. To the right, a section of the building is constructed from reddish-brown bricks. The interior, visible through the glass, is warmly lit and contains a dark wooden dining table with several chairs. The floor inside appears to be a polished, reflective material. The overall atmosphere is serene and modern, highlighting the architectural details of the building.

SOARING SPACE: JOHN LAUTNER'S SILVERTOP

— Frank Escher

'The house was to be quiet, both to the ear and the eye, and achieve a sense of natural beauty by blending into the natural surroundings.'

In a booklet that client Kenneth Reiner and architect John Lautner published for tours conducted at an un-finished Silvertop in early 1960 (to raise funds for another collaboration of theirs, the Midtown School), one finds, among pages describing in great detail the many technical and structural innovations the visitors would encounter, this statement: a poetic agenda. It is a reminder that above all, this extraordinary house is a home, albeit one of great spatial, structural and technical experimentation.

Los Angeles itself, of course, has a tradition of experimentation and is seen internationally as a laboratory for Twentieth century residential architecture: it is here that Wright produced some of his most adventurous work; it is here that early modernists – Irving Gill, Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra – explored new ideas of space and structure; it is here that Case Study architects – Charles and Ray Eames, Pierre Koenig, Craig Ellwood – examined how technological innovation could align with social change; it is here where an architect – Frank Gehry – took apart and re-assembled his own house, exploring new forms and reshaping our understanding of contemporary architecture. Lautner knew them all. He respected some more than others, and he was friends with a few. Further, Lautner's place in Twentieth century American architecture can be best summed up by two observations: Frank Lloyd Wright considered his celebrated pupil to be the "Next-Best Architect on Earth" (Wright himself, naturally, being the Best); and Frank Gehry, as a student, considered John Lautner to be 'a God'. Lautner is the missing link between the two.

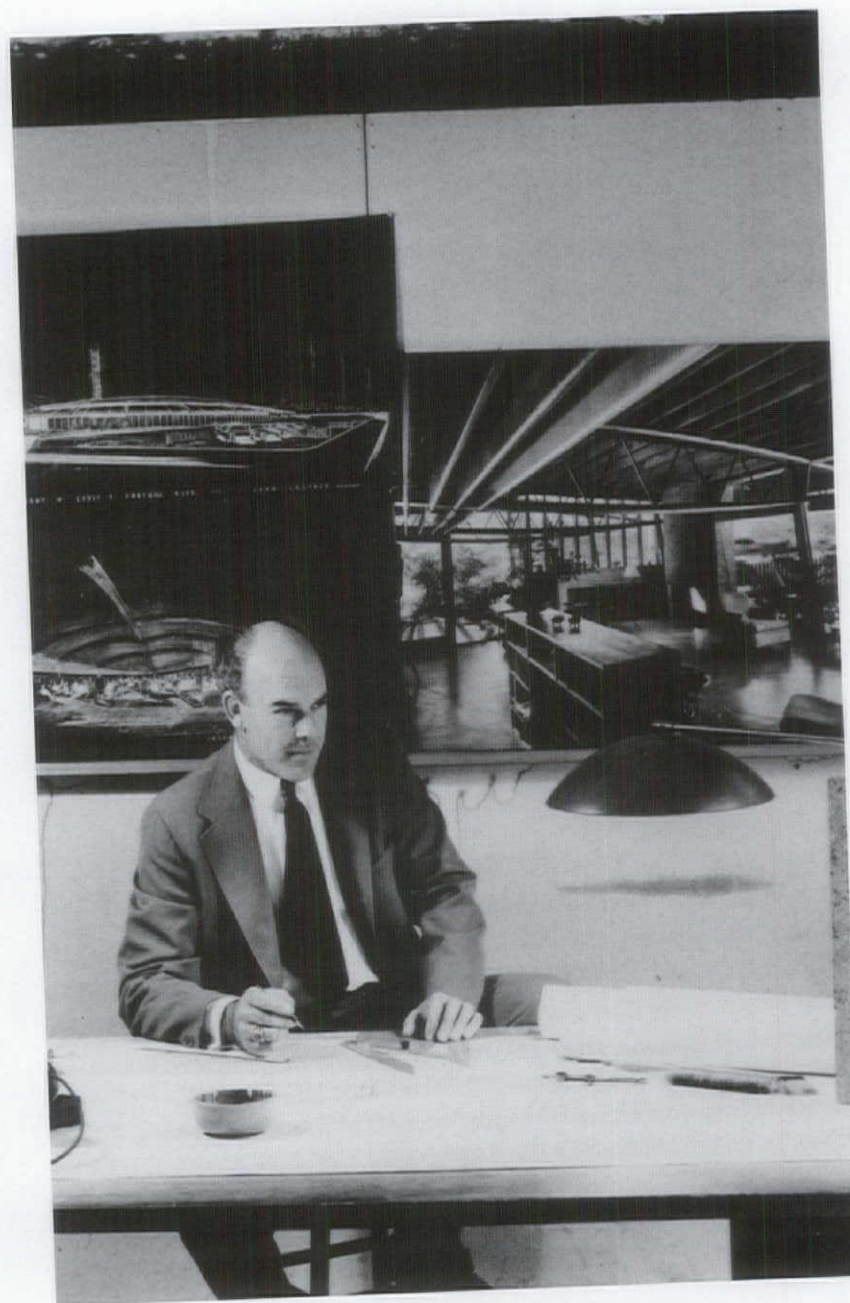
Los Angeles was indeed quite literally a laboratory: fueled by the efforts during and after the war it was becoming a place of great technical innovation, a place of research and exploration. Various industries – in particular the aerospace industry – created a thriving economy, an economy that promised opportunity, work and a bright new world, an economy that brought tens of thousands of people, technical experts and specialists, to the city. One of them was inventor and industrialist Ken Reiner.

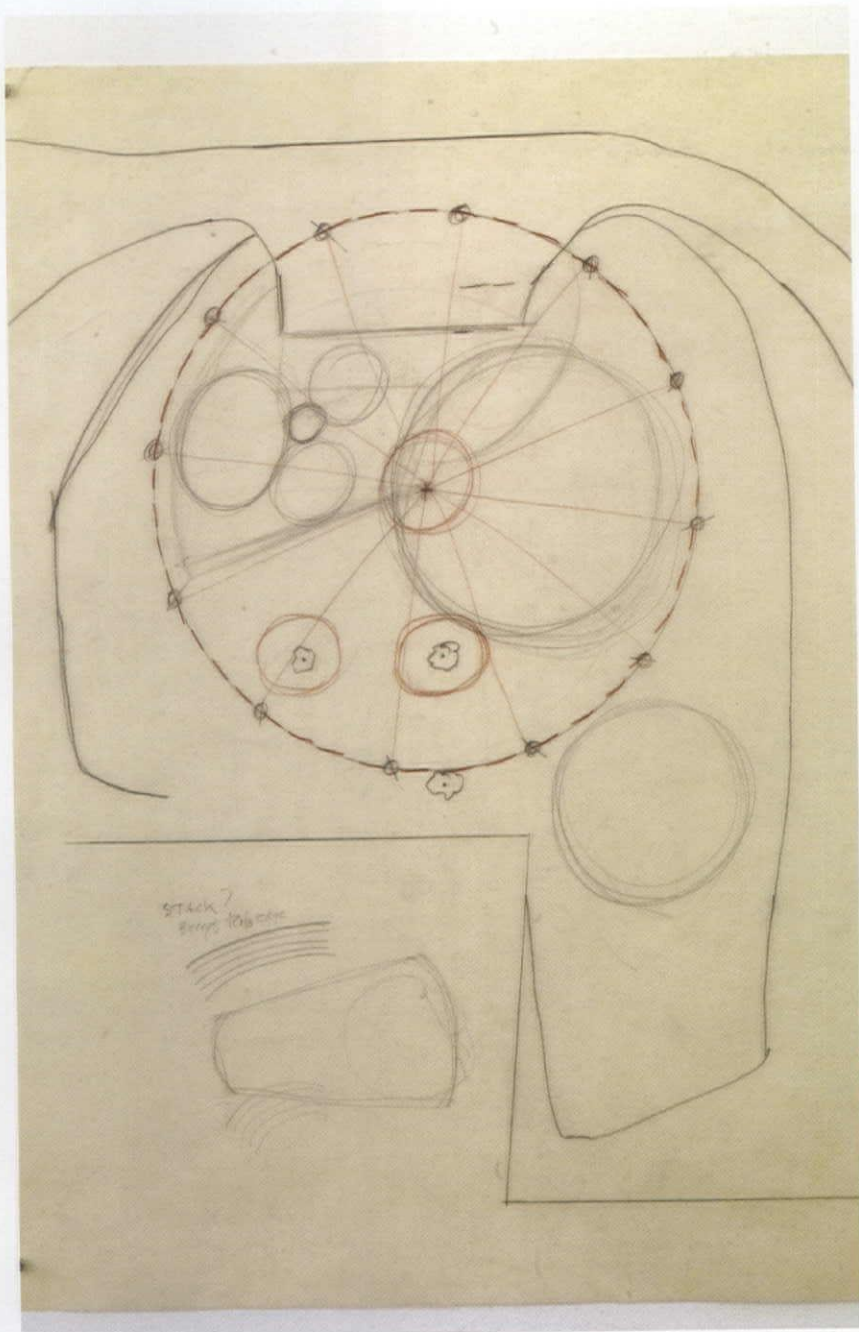
THE CLIENT

Reiner was born in New York in 1916, graduated from the Brooklyn Ethical Culture School in 1933 and began visiting California in 1936, one year before completing his degree in Electrical Engineering at Purdue University. He settled here in 1941, first worked at Lockheed and later, for about three months, Hughes Aircraft. In 1943 he and a fellow Purdue graduate started their own company: Kaynar, manufacturers of self-locking fasteners for aircraft construction. The end of the war and a corresponding reduction in warplane production decreased the demand for the Kaynar fasteners. In 1946 Reiner developed a completely different product, a product that represented the new post-war era: the Lady Ellen hair Klippies (by 1959, Time magazine reported, Klippies had captured 90% of market). In 1951, Reiner returned to the company's first line of production when he developed the self-locking Kaylock aircraft nut, a fastener so light it reduced the weight of B-52 bombers by 600 pounds. It is still one of the main fasteners in airplane construction.

Between 1949 and 1959, Reiner and his family lived in Silver Lake in Schindler's Guy Wilson house (1935-39) at 2090 Redcliff Street. Schindler did some work on the house, revising the kitchen and enclosing outdoor areas (the Schindler Archive, WV 448, lists 'drawings and correspondence' for a remodel for Reiner in 1949 and 1953). Schindler also produced, three years before he died in August 1953, drawings and specifications for a remodel of a factory building for "Kaynar Manufacturing Company", then at 818 E 16th Street, Los Angeles (Schindler Archive WV 454, 1950).

While living there, Reiner purchased an extraordinary piece of land at the top of a nearby hill: views extended both to the east, across the Silver Lake to the San Gabriel Mountains, and to the west of the Hollywood Hills and the Griffith Park observatory. After a long and exhaustive search, (Lautner claimed forty architects were interviewed), Reiner remembered speaking to four (William S. Beckett, Craig Ellwood, Frederick Emmons & A. Quincy Jones, and Richard Neutra) and visiting their projects – Lautner was engaged. Reiner had seen Lautner's first major house, the Harvey Residence, for the aluminum magnate Leo Harvey. Silvertop, though, would be even grander. It was the first really ambitious commission in Lautner's career and, alongside Chemosphere a few years later, it would mark a clear turning point in his work.





THE ARCHITECT

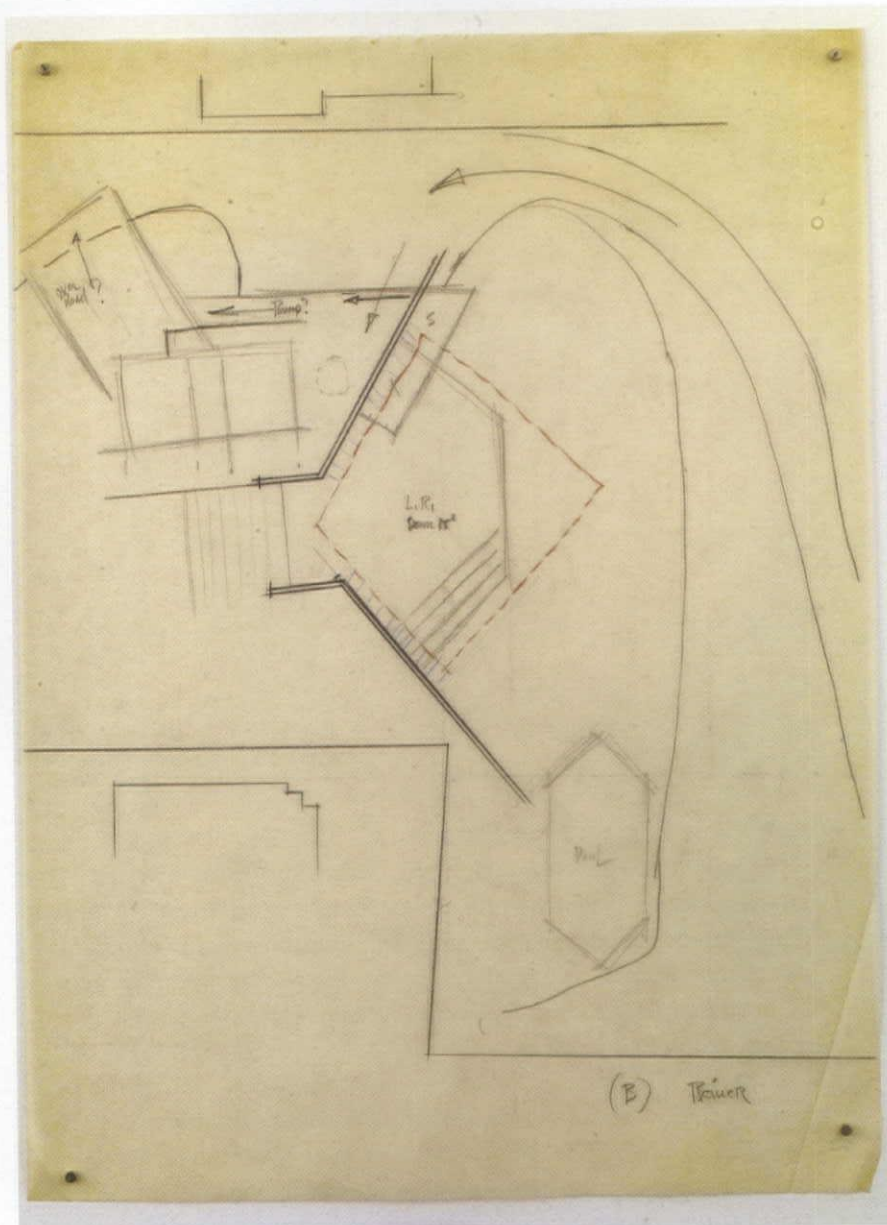
In the 1950s, Lautner's office was housed in his converted garage behind the grand old two-story California bungalow where he then lived in Hollywood. Drafting tables were 'sheets of plywood on saw horses' and 'fluorescent lights hung on chains from the unfinished ceiling. There was no glass in the opening that had held the large doors,' 'the walls were unfinished,' and 'the floor was sometimes unswept'. Lautner 'customarily dressed in jacket and tie for the day, in and out of the office'. Many of his assistants then had come out of Wright's apprenticeship program at Taliesin West, including Louis Wiehle, who after working for Wright for a year, began working with Lautner in April 1951 'with the understanding that pay would be of uncertain amount and irregular in coming'. For all, though, there was a 'heady feeling of being part of good architecture, exciting architecture, architecture that was in the forefront of its time yet was going to live on because of its integrity, quality, originality, and suitability.' It was through Wiehle that Lautner, then 42, met, a 24-year old Swiss architect, Guy Zebert, in 1953.

Zebert, Lautner and their wives became friends. The Zeberts moved into the Lautner house, and while Zebert worked during the day with Welton Beckett (the architect of the Capitol Records Building, 1956), he began helping Lautner in the evenings and

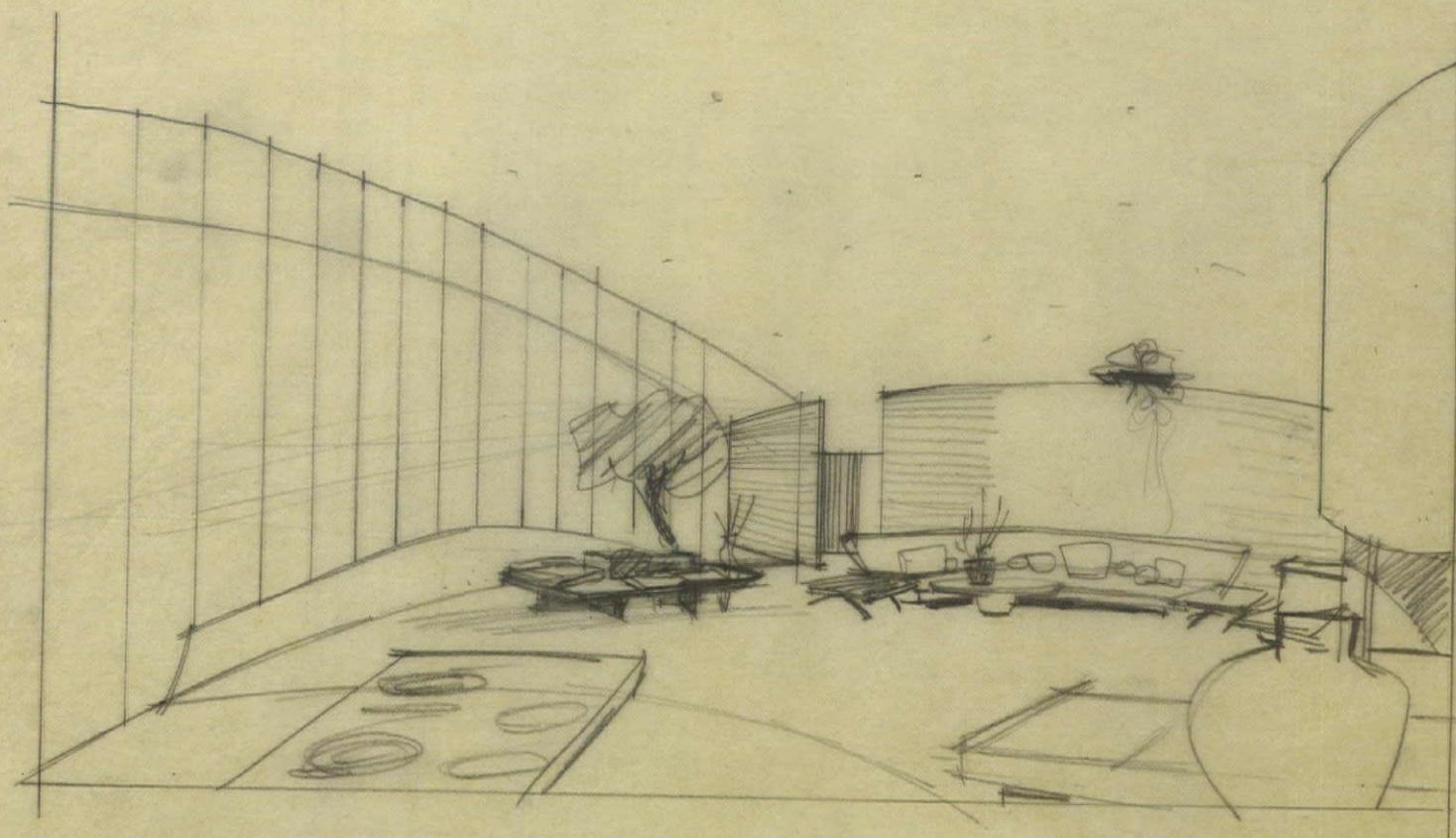
weekends, assisting on projects like the Bergren reconstruction, the Beachwood Market, the Harpel House, as well as experimental construction projects – such as pivoting concrete walls – around Lautner's own house and garden. In April 1956, when Silvertop became a project, Lautner engaged Zebert full time.

THE DESIGN

Lautner prepared sketches for various schemes to capture the panoramic views: early sketches show that a large circular glass building, with smaller circular spaces enclosed within, and a glass box angled along the east-west axis were briefly examined. Soon, ideas of solid walls funneling and framing the eastern and western views and screening the private rooms from the central space developed. The concept of the house, a space bracketed between two solid walls curving in from the landscape and back out with a gigantic roof arcing over them, quickly emerged.



April 29, 1956 can be regarded as the start for Silvertop. On this day, Lautner and Zebert staked out the curved walls on the site to examine and verify the views these would frame. By December 1956, engineering drawings and calculations for the house were produced by structural engineer Barney Cardan (who worked with Lautner between April 1953 and June 1959 on, among other projects, the Harpel House, the unbuilt Harpel guest house, the Zahn and Hatherall houses, the Ernest Lautner house in Florida, the unbuilt Pearlman residence in Santa Ana, as well as the Chemosphere).



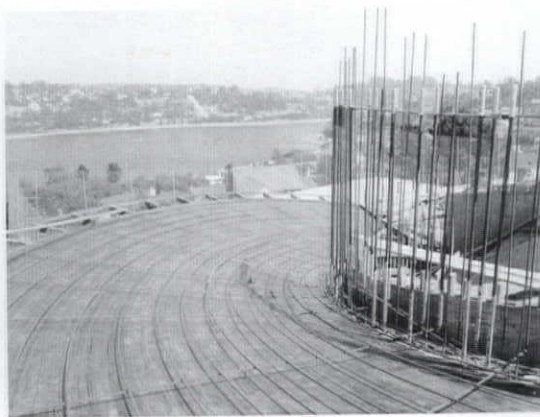
Following the development of the design for the main house – the curved brick walls, the roof, the basement – the Round House, a guest house supporting the driveway ramp, was begun (early in the design process, two additional lots were purchased, which allowed Reiner and Lautner first to add the pool and later to add the driveway to Redcliff Street).

Originally, the roof of Silvertop itself was to be built and engineered in wood. By March of 1957, the engineering for the Round House with the cantilevered driveway began, and by May 1957 Lautner decided to rethink the wooden structure of the roof as a vast concrete shell. First a conventional concrete construction was proposed, later a post-tensioned concrete shell. For this work, Tung-Yen Lin, one of the world's foremost experts on pre-stressing and post-tensioning concrete technologies, was brought in to the project as the engineer. Lin, born in China in 1912, trained there as a civil engineer and, after 1931, at Berkeley, where he later taught.

In reinforced concrete construction, the steel absorbs the tension, the concrete the compression on the structure. By either pre-stressing the steel before the concrete is poured, or post-tensioning

it after (with the steel encased in a sleeve allowing movement within the concrete slab) the structural performance of the steel members is increased greatly, allowing a more economical and, ultimately, more elegant use of the materials. Research into pre-stressing methods began in the late 19th century, and it was the work of French engineer Eugene Freyssinet (1879 - 1962), who developed in 1928 a system of anchorage or connectors between the steel tendons and the concrete, and other technical advances, that allowed a widespread use of these methods in Europe. It was Lin's further refinements of Freyssinet's methods and his continued promotion of them that effectively introduced pre-stressing and post-tensioning methods widely in the United States.

T.Y. Lin was introduced to Reiner by the Bay-area architect Jack Hillmer, who had briefly worked on a design for Reiner's Kaynar factory. There are in the Lautner Archive structural drawings for a T.Y. Lin Kaynar project of June 1956, though it is unclear who the architect was. Reiner later, in 1957-58, continued work with John Lautner and Lin on the Kaynar factory, completing it in 1959 as a two-acre post-tensioned roof construction is covered by a shallow lake to maintain a constant temperature.



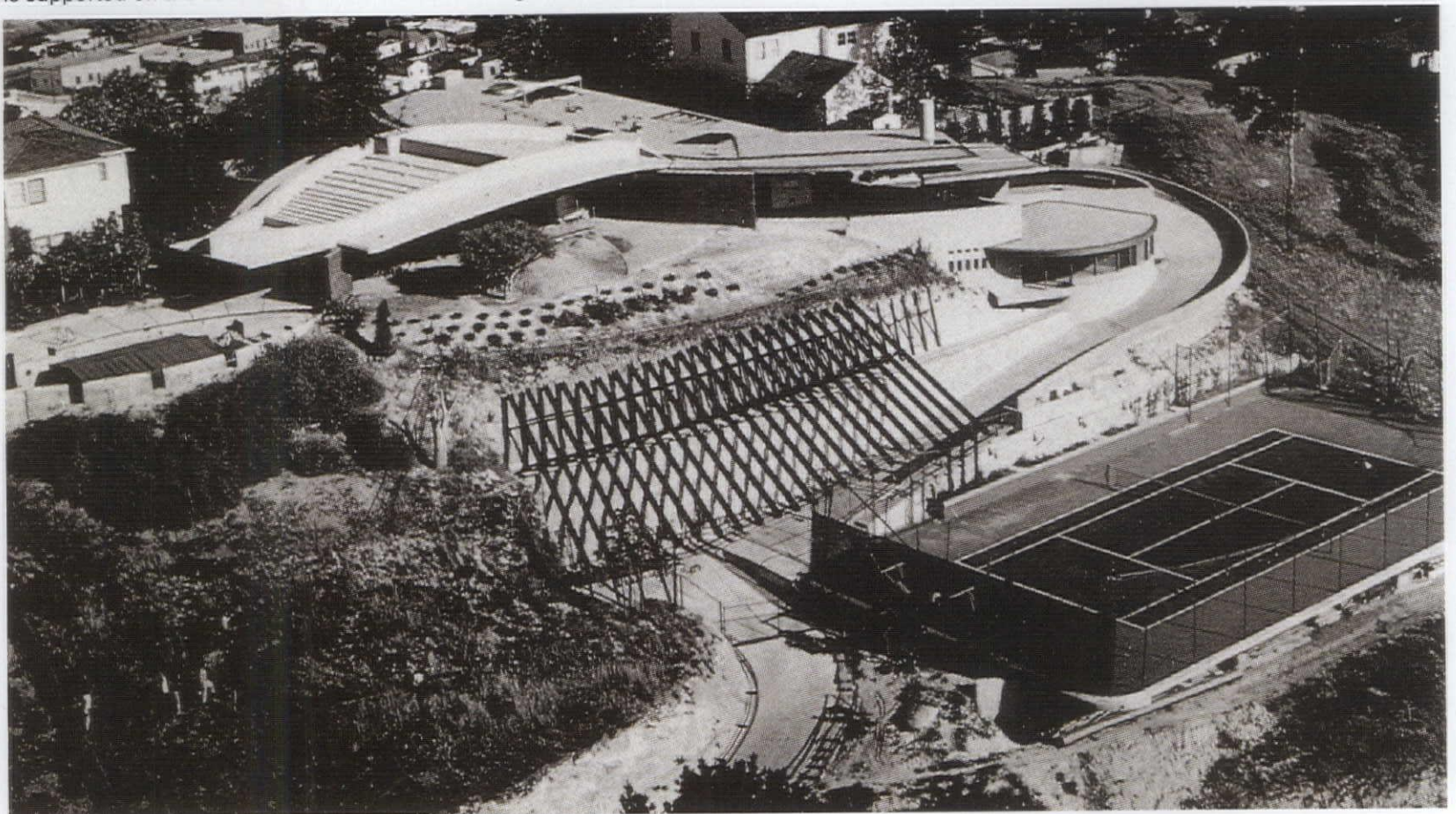
THE CONSTRUCTION

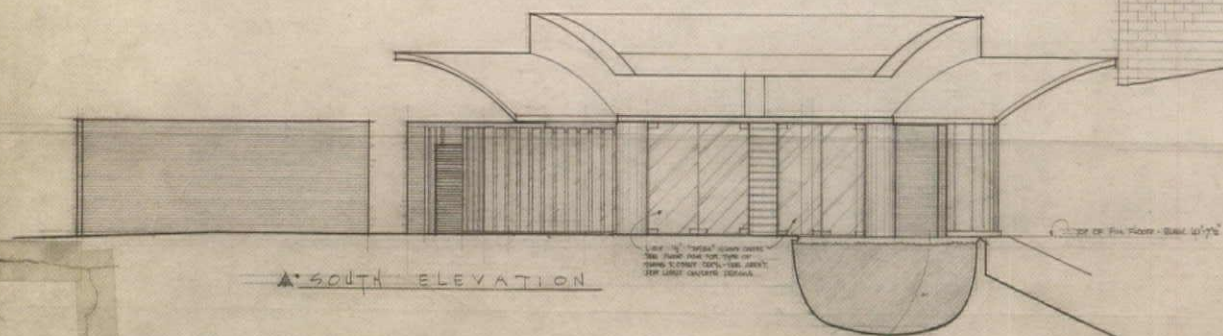
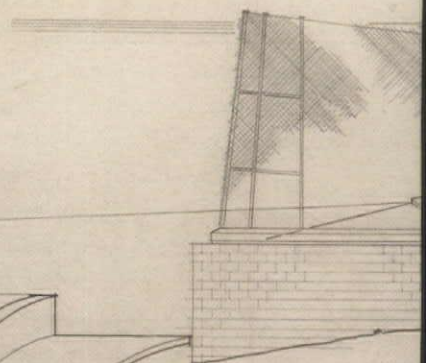
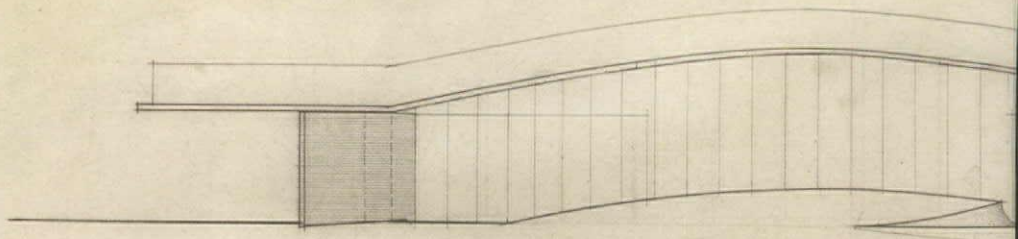
Construction on Silvertop began in the summer of 1957 and moved forward swiftly – by 1958, all major structural portions would be completed. Wally Niewiadomski, who had earlier built some of Frank Lloyd Wright's projects, was brought in as the general contractor, and Hector Mecka as a concrete sub-contractor. Mecka oversaw the construction of the foundations, basement, brick walls, columns, and the concrete roof. The pool was excavated and sprayed with gunite early on but remained otherwise unfinished and empty. Weekly meetings took place at Reiner's house – sometimes apparently in his pool. Reiner, an amateur filmmaker, would review the week's footage with his team of architect and consultants. In 1958, Jim Warner replaced Mecka for the second phase of concrete work: the construction of the Round House, the cantilevered driveway ramp and the completion of the tennis court and pool.

The roof is a five-inch post-tensioned concrete structural slab, with a span of 80 feet. This is suspended from two curved beams above the roof that are connected at mid-point and which in turn rest on four 30" diameter columns extending as caissons into the ground. The shell is rigidly fixed on the columns at the northern end, while it is supported on the southern end on flexible bearings, allowing

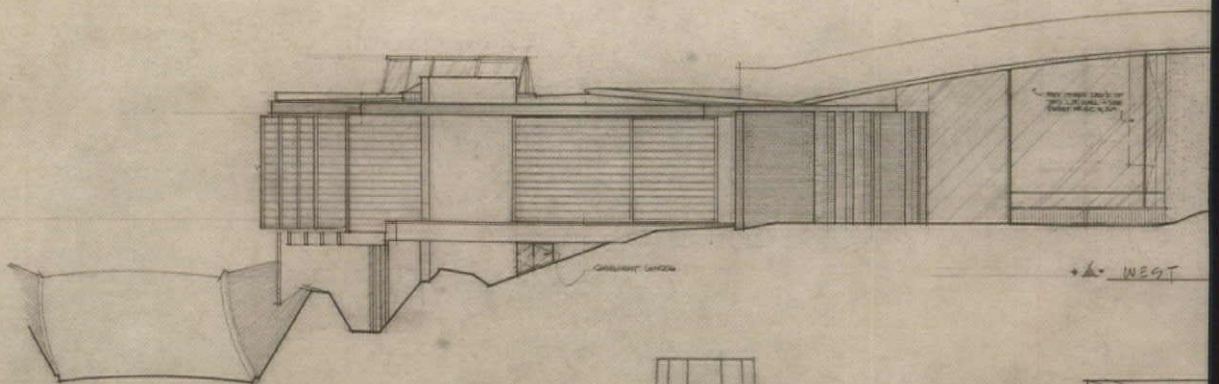
a minimal amount of movement. The roof is then further cantilevered towards the pool. During construction, Lin, a small-built man, would be observed bouncing on the outer edge of this roof to test its structural performance. To maintain structural integrity, the shell – even of this titanic size – had to be constructed in one continuous pour. Since concrete trucks could not ascend the steep drive to the construction site, a 160' crane was erected on Micheltorena Street to convey – bucket by bucket – the 162 tons of concrete that were brought to the site in an endless row of concrete trucks. At one point during the pour, the intrepid Zebert was hoisted in the bucket 160' into the air to film the construction site from above. Between the movement of the crane and Zebert's handling of the camera, the resulting film – as Reiner premiered, at their next meeting – induced general motion sickness.

The driveway, a helical bridge which tapers from twelve inches at its inner edge to three inches at its outer edge, is a horizontal post-tensioned construction, supported by the wall of the Round House, a vertical post-tensioned concrete block construction. Last, the tennis court is a 60' by 120' slab of post-tensioned concrete, 6" thick at its outer edge and cantilevering an astonishing 16 – feet from its supporting wall.

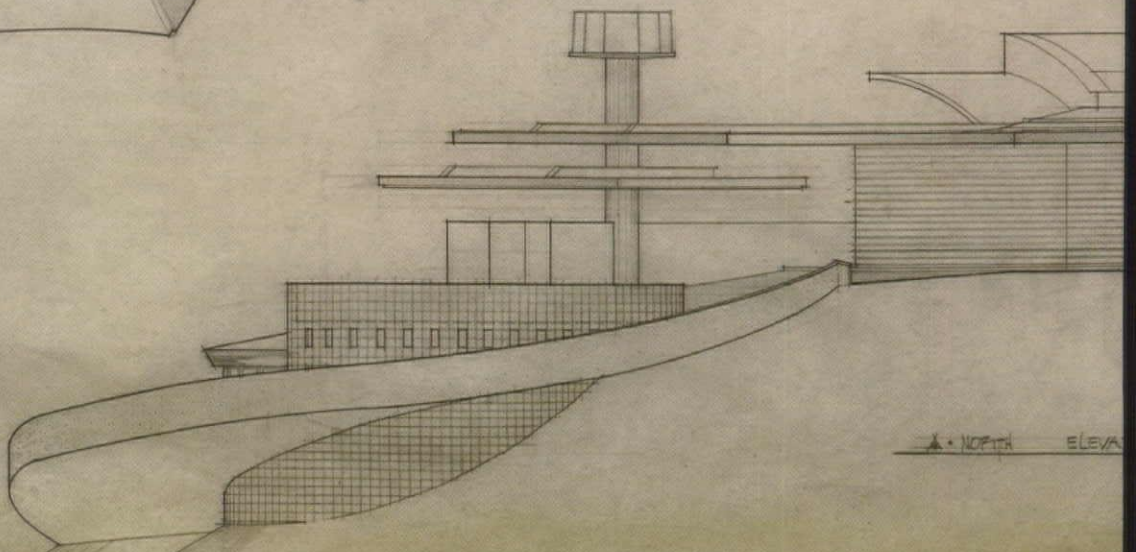




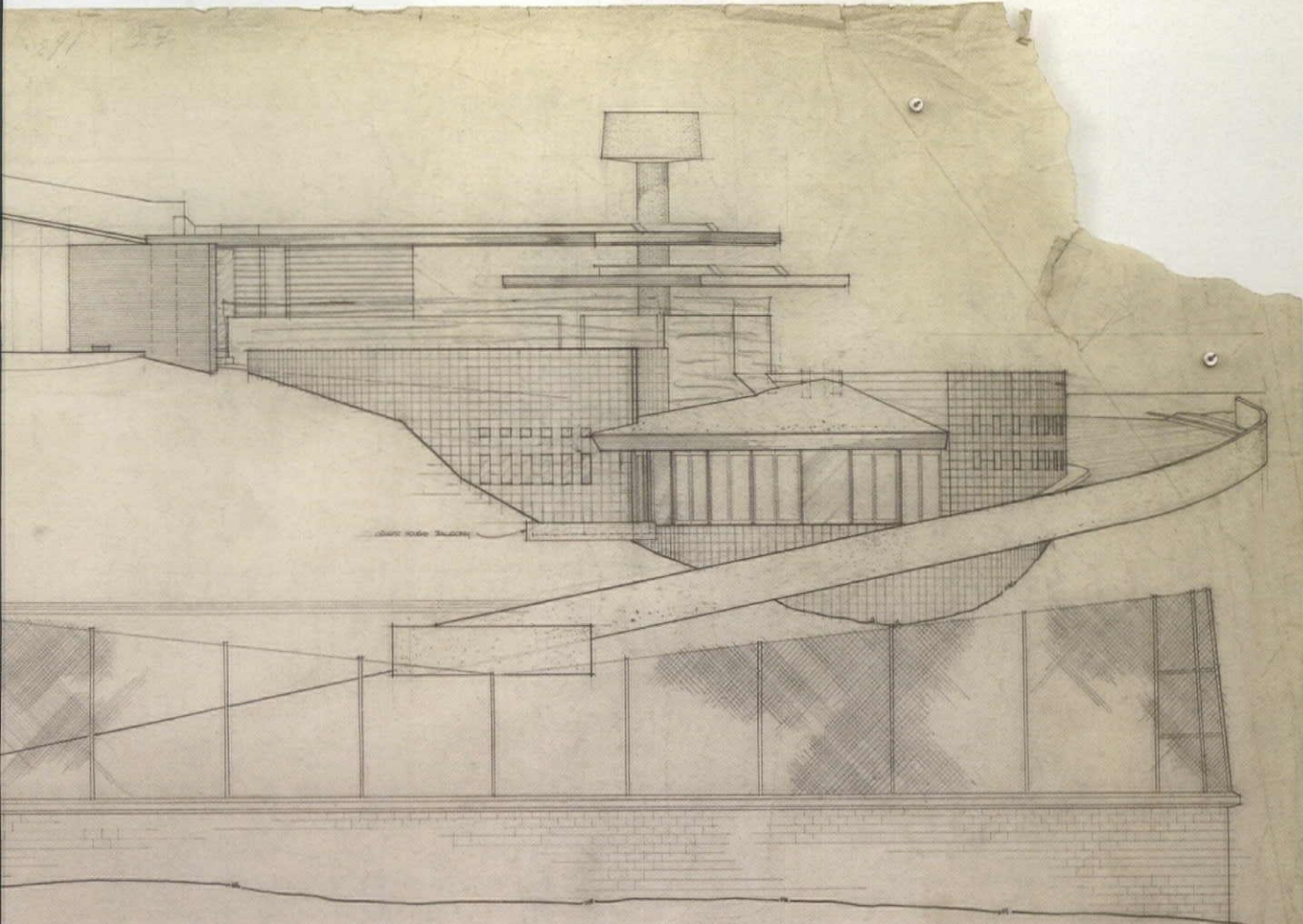
▲ SOUTH ELEVATION



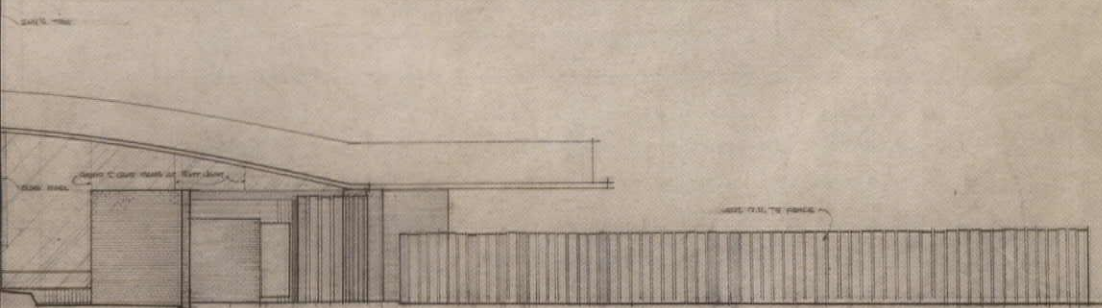
* L. WEST



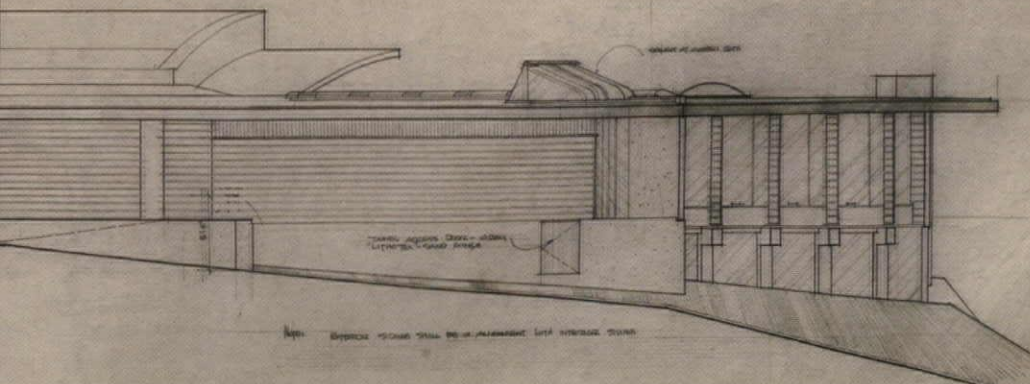
A. NORTH ELEVATION



*** EAST ELEVATION



SECTION



1. 1/2" = 1'-0"
 2. 1/4" = 1'-0"
 3. 1/8" = 1'-0"
 4. 1/16" = 1'-0"
 5. 1/32" = 1'-0"
 6. 1/64" = 1'-0"
 7. 1/128" = 1'-0"
 8. 1/256" = 1'-0"
 9. 1/512" = 1'-0"
 10. 1/1024" = 1'-0"
 11. 1/2048" = 1'-0"
 12. 1/4096" = 1'-0"
 13. 1/8192" = 1'-0"
 14. 1/16384" = 1'-0"
 15. 1/32768" = 1'-0"
 16. 1/65536" = 1'-0"
 17. 1/131072" = 1'-0"
 18. 1/262144" = 1'-0"
 19. 1/524288" = 1'-0"
 20. 1/1048576" = 1'-0"
 21. 1/2097152" = 1'-0"
 22. 1/4194304" = 1'-0"
 23. 1/8388608" = 1'-0"
 24. 1/16777216" = 1'-0"
 25. 1/33554432" = 1'-0"
 26. 1/67108864" = 1'-0"
 27. 1/134217728" = 1'-0"
 28. 1/268435456" = 1'-0"
 29. 1/536870912" = 1'-0"
 30. 1/1073741824" = 1'-0"
 31. 1/2147483648" = 1'-0"
 32. 1/4294967296" = 1'-0"
 33. 1/8589934592" = 1'-0"
 34. 1/17179869184" = 1'-0"
 35. 1/34359738368" = 1'-0"
 36. 1/68719476736" = 1'-0"
 37. 1/137438953472" = 1'-0"
 38. 1/274877906944" = 1'-0"
 39. 1/549755813888" = 1'-0"
 40. 1/1099511627776" = 1'-0"
 41. 1/2199023255552" = 1'-0"
 42. 1/4398046511104" = 1'-0"
 43. 1/8796093022208" = 1'-0"
 44. 1/17592186044416" = 1'-0"
 45. 1/35184372088832" = 1'-0"
 46. 1/70368744177664" = 1'-0"
 47. 1/140737488355328" = 1'-0"
 48. 1/281474976710656" = 1'-0"
 49. 1/562949953421312" = 1'-0"
 50. 1/1125899906842624" = 1'-0"
 51. 1/2251799813685248" = 1'-0"
 52. 1/4503599627370496" = 1'-0"
 53. 1/9007199254740992" = 1'-0"
 54. 1/18014398509481984" = 1'-0"
 55. 1/36028797018963968" = 1'-0"
 56. 1/72057594037927936" = 1'-0"
 57. 1/144115188075855872" = 1'-0"
 58. 1/288230376151711744" = 1'-0"
 59. 1/576460752303423488" = 1'-0"
 60. 1/1152921504606846976" = 1'-0"
 61. 1/2305843009213693952" = 1'-0"
 62. 1/4611686018427387904" = 1'-0"
 63. 1/9223372036854775808" = 1'-0"
 64. 1/18446744073709551616" = 1'-0"
 65. 1/36893488147419103232" = 1'-0"
 66. 1/73786976294838206464" = 1'-0"
 67. 1/147573952589676412928" = 1'-0"
 68. 1/295147905179352825856" = 1'-0"
 69. 1/590295810358705651712" = 1'-0"
 70. 1/1180591620717411303424" = 1'-0"
 71. 1/2361183241434822606848" = 1'-0"
 72. 1/4722366482869645213696" = 1'-0"
 73. 1/9444732965739290427392" = 1'-0"
 74. 1/18889465931478580854784" = 1'-0"
 75. 1/37778931862957161709568" = 1'-0"
 76. 1/75557863725914323419136" = 1'-0"
 77. 1/151115727451828646838272" = 1'-0"
 78. 1/302231454903657293676544" = 1'-0"
 79. 1/604462909807314587353088" = 1'-0"
 80. 1/1208925819614629174706176" = 1'-0"
 81. 1/2417851639229258349412352" = 1'-0"
 82. 1/4835703278458516698824704" = 1'-0"
 83. 1/9671406556917033397649408" = 1'-0"
 84. 1/19342813113834066795298816" = 1'-0"
 85. 1/38685626227668133590597632" = 1'-0"
 86. 1/77371252455336267181195264" = 1'-0"
 87. 1/154742504910672534362390528" = 1'-0"
 88. 1/309485009821345068724781056" = 1'-0"
 89. 1/618970019642690137449562112" = 1'-0"
 90. 1/1237940039285380274899124224" = 1'-0"
 91. 1/2475880078570760549798248448" = 1'-0"
 92. 1/4951760157141521099596496896" = 1'-0"
 93. 1/9903520314283042199192993792" = 1'-0"
 94. 1/19807040628566084398385987584" = 1'-0"
 95. 1/39614081257132168796771975168" = 1'-0"
 96. 1/79228162514264337593543950336" = 1'-0"
 97. 1/158456325028528675187087900672" = 1'-0"
 98. 1/316912650057057350374175801344" = 1'-0"
 99. 1/633825300114114700748351602688" = 1'-0"
 100. 1/1267650600228229401496703205376" = 1'-0"
 101. 1/2535301200456458802993406410752" = 1'-0"
 102. 1/5070602400912917605986812821504" = 1'-0"
 103. 1/10141204801825835211973625643008" = 1'-0"
 104. 1/20282409603651670423947251286016" = 1'-0"
 105. 1/40564819207303340847894502572032" = 1'-0"
 106. 1/81129638414606681695789005144064" = 1'-0"
 107. 1/162259276829213363391578010288128" = 1'-0"
 108. 1/324518553658426726783156020576256" = 1'-0"
 109. 1/649037107316853453566312041152512" = 1'-0"
 110. 1/1298074214633706907132624082305024" = 1'-0"
 111. 1/2596148429267413814265248164610048" = 1'-0"
 112. 1/5192296858534827628530496329220096" = 1'-0"
 113. 1/10384593717069655257060992658440192" = 1'-0"
 114. 1/20769187434139310514121985316880384" = 1'-0"
 115. 1/41538374868278621028243970633760768" = 1'-0"
 116. 1/83076749736557242056487941267521536" = 1'-0"
 117. 1/166153499473114484112975882535043072" = 1'-0"
 118. 1/332306998946228968225951765070086144" = 1'-0"
 119. 1/664613997892457936451903530140172288" = 1'-0"
 120. 1/1329227995784915872903807060280344576" = 1'-0"
 121. 1/2658455991569831745807614120560689152" = 1'-0"
 122. 1/5316911983139663491615228241121378304" = 1'-0"
 123. 1/10633823966279326983230456482242756608" = 1'-0"
 124. 1/21267647932558653966460912964485513216" = 1'-0"
 125. 1/42535295865117307932921825928971026432" = 1'-0"
 126. 1/85070591730234615865843651857942052864" = 1'-0"
 127. 1/170141183460469231731687303715884105728" = 1'-0"
 128. 1/340282366920938463463374607431768211456" = 1'-0"
 129. 1/680564733841876926926749214863536422912" = 1'-0"
 130. 1/1361129467683753853853498429727072845824" = 1'-0"
 131. 1/2722258935367507707706996859454145691648" = 1'-0"
 132. 1/5444517870735015415413993718908291383296" = 1'-0"
 133. 1/10889035741470030830827987437816582766592" = 1'-0"
 134. 1/21778071482940061661655974875633165533184" = 1'-0"
 135. 1/43556142965880123323311949751266331066368" = 1'-0"
 136. 1/87112285931760246646623899502532662132736" = 1'-0"
 137. 1/174224571863520493293247799005065324265472" = 1'-0"
 138. 1/348449143727040986586495598010130648530944" = 1'-0"
 139. 1/696898287454081973172991196020261297061888" = 1'-0"
 140. 1/1393796574908163946345982392040522594123776" = 1'-0"
 141. 1/2787593149816327892691964784081045188247552" = 1'-0"
 142. 1/5575186299632655785383929568162090376495104" = 1'-0"
 143. 1/11150372599265311570767859136324180752990208" = 1'-0"
 144. 1/22300745198530623141535718272648361505980416" = 1'-0"
 145. 1/44601490397061246283071436545296723011960832" = 1'-0"
 146. 1/89202980794122492566142873090593446023921664" = 1'-0"
 147. 1/178405961588244985132285746181186892047843328" = 1'-0"
 148. 1/356811923176489970264571492362373784095686656" = 1'-0"
 149. 1/713623846352979940529142984724747568191373312" = 1'-0"
 150. 1/1427247692705959881058285969449495136382746624" = 1'-0"
 151. 1/2854495385411919762116571938898990272765493248" = 1'-0"
 152. 1/5708990770823839524233143877797980545530986496" = 1'-0"
 153. 1/11417981541647679048466287755595961091061972992" = 1'-0"
 154. 1/22835963083295358096932575511191922182123945984" = 1'-0"
 155. 1/45671926166590716193865151022383844364247891968" = 1'-0"
 156. 1/91343852333181432387730302044767688728495783936" = 1'-0"
 157. 1/182687704666362864775460604089535377456991567872" = 1'-0"
 158. 1/365375409332725729550921208179070754913983135744" = 1'-0"
 159. 1/730750818665451459101842416358141509827966271488" = 1'-0"
 160. 1/1461501637330902918203684832716283019655932542976" = 1'-0"
 161. 1/2923003274661805836407369665432566039311865085952" = 1'-0"
 162. 1/5846006549323611672814739330865132078623730171904" = 1'-0"
 163. 1/11692013098647223345629478661730264157247460343808" = 1'-0"
 164. 1/23384026197294446691258957323460528314494920687616" = 1'-0"
 165. 1/46768052394588893382517914646921056628989841375232" = 1'-0"
 166. 1/93536104789177786765035829293842113257979682750464" = 1'-0"
 167. 1/187072209578355573530071658587684226515959365500928" = 1'-0"
 168. 1/374144419156711147060143317175368453031918731001856" = 1'-0"
 169. 1/748288838313422294120286634350736906063837462003712" = 1'-0"
 170. 1/1496577676626844588240573268701473812127674924007424" = 1'-0"
 171. 1/2993155353253689176481146537402947624255349848014848" = 1'-0"
 172. 1/5986310706507378352962293074805895248510699696029696" = 1'-0"
 173. 1/11972621413014756705924586149611790497021399392059392" = 1'-0"
 174. 1/23945242826029513411849172299223580994042798784118784" = 1'-0"
 175. 1/47890485652059026823698344598447161988085597568237568" = 1'-0"
 176. 1/95780971304118053647396689196894323976171195136475136" = 1'-0"
 177. 1/191561942608236107294793378393788647952342390272950272" = 1'-0"
 178. 1/383123885216472214589586756787577295904684780545900544" = 1'-0"
 179. 1/766247770432944429179173513575154591809369561091801088" = 1'-0"
 180. 1/1532495540865888858358347027150309183618739122183602176" = 1'-0"
 181. 1/3064991081731777716716694054300618367237478244367204352" = 1'-0"
 182. 1/6129982163463555433433388108601236734474956488734408704" = 1'-0"
 183. 1/12259964326927110866866776217202473468949912977468817408" = 1'-0"
 184. 1/24519928653854221733733552434404946937899825954937634816" = 1'-0"
 185. 1/49039857307708443467467104868809893875799651909875269632" = 1'-0"
 186. 1/98079714615416886934934209737619787751599303819750539264" = 1'-0"
 187. 1/196159429230833773869868419475239575503198607639501078528" = 1'-0"
 188. 1/392318858461667547739736838950479151006397215279002157056" = 1'-0"
 189. 1/784637716923335095479473677900958302012794430558004314112" = 1'-0"
 190. 1/1569275433846670190958947355801916604025588861116008628224" = 1'-0"
 191. 1/3138550867693340381917894711603833208051177722232017256448" = 1'-0"
 192. 1/6277101735386680763835789423207666416102355444464034512896" = 1'-0"
 193. 1/12554203470773361527671578846415332832204710888928069025792" = 1'-0"
 194. 1/25108406941546723055343157692830665664409421777856138051584" = 1'-0"
 195. 1/50216813883093446110686315385661331328818843555712276103168" = 1'-0"
 196. 1/100433627766186892221372630771322662657637687111424552206336" = 1'-0"
 197. 1/200867255532373784442745261542645325315275374222849104412672" = 1'-0"
 198. 1/401734511064747568885490523085290650630550748445698208825344" = 1'-0"
 199. 1/803469022129495137770981046170581301261101496891396417650688" = 1'-0"
 200. 1/1606938044258990275541962092341162602522202993782792835301376" = 1'-0"
 201. 1/3213876088517980551083924184682325205044405987565585670602752" = 1'-0"
 202. 1/6427752177035961102167848369364650410088811975131171341205504" = 1'-0"
 203. 1/12855504354071922204335696738729300820177623950262342682411008" = 1'-0"
 204. 1/25711008708143844408671393477458601640355247900524685364822016" = 1'-0"
 205. 1/51422017416287688817342786954917203280710495801049370729644032" = 1'-0"
 206. 1/102844034832575377634685573909834406561420991602098741459288064" = 1'-0"
 207. 1/205688069665150755269371147819668813122841983204197482918576128" = 1'-0"
 208. 1/411376139330301510538742295639337626245683966408394965837152256" = 1'-0"
 209. 1/822752278660603021077484591278675252491367932816789931674304512" = 1'-0"
 210. 1/1645504557321206042154969182557350504982735865633579863348609024" = 1'-0"
 211. 1/3291009114642412084309938365114701009965471731267159726697218048" = 1'-0"
 212. 1/6582018229284824168619876730229402019930943462534319453394436096" = 1'-0"
 213. 1/13164036458569648337239753460458804039861886925068638906788872192" = 1'-0"
 214. 1/26328072917139296674479506920917608079723773850137277813577744384" = 1'-0"
 215. 1/52656145834278593348959013841835216159447547700274555627155488768" = 1'-0"
 216. 1/105312291668557186697918027683670432318895095400549111254310975536" = 1'-0"
 217. 1/210624583337114373395836055367340864637790190801098222508621951072" = 1'-0"
 218. 1/421249166674228746791672110734681729275580381602196445017243902144" = 1'-0"
 219. 1/842498333348457493583344221469363458551160763204392890034487804288" = 1'-0"
 220. 1/1684996666696914987166688442938726917102321526408785780068975608576" = 1'-0"
 221. 1/3369993333393829974333376885877453834204643052817571560137951217152" = 1'-0"
 222. 1/6739986666787659948666753771754907668409286105635143120275902434304" = 1'-0"
 223. 1/13479973333575319897333507543509815336818572211270286240551804868608" = 1'-0"
 224. 1/26959946667150639794667015087019630673637144422540572481103609737216" = 1'-0"
 225. 1/53919893334301279589334030174039261347274288845081144962207219474432" = 1'-0"
 226. 1/107839786668602559178668060348078522694548577690162289924414438948864" = 1'-0"
 227. 1/21567957333720



THE FIGHT FOR BETTER BUILDING

All in all, 26 different building permits were needed for the project – most of which were processed, as Zebert remembered, by plan checker Tom Brown, who would later become the head of the Los Angeles Building Department. The driveway, though, created a problem. The Los Angeles Building Department, unfamiliar with this type of structure, would not accept the engineering. Reiner took legal action against the building department. After subpoenas were issued to every department commissioner, the department agreed to accept a load-test of the structure. When the test was conducted, the load of the sandbags caused less deflection to the ramp than the sun rising and setting.

As a result of this episode, Reiner started his 'Council for Better Buildings', which met monthly for a couple of years and included, besides Lautner and Reiner, engineers Ed Rice, Richard Bradshaw, and others. The goal was to broaden the perspective of the building department engineers, rather than inhibiting the architects' creative designs to what the building department may be familiar with. The architects, ultimately, were to have sole responsibility over their work.

Another result of Reiner's victory over the building department was that he was approached to help save Simon Rodia's Watts Towers – the Building Department was questioning their structural stability and ordered their demolition. A benefit for the towers was organized at Silvertop. Lautner, with John Entenza, Garrett Eckbo and others, was a panelist discussing the significance of the towers at a Pasadena Art Museum event. Reiner again got the building department to accept a load test (that he paid for) which proved, on October 10, 1959, the structural stability of the towers. They remained standing.

PLAN AND SYSTEMS

Some of the house's innovations were in its planning. An entire system of underground passages was devised, allowing below-ground access to most of the spaces of the house above. The main entry to this system was through a hinged hatch outside of the house opening directly into a utility room in the basement, with other discreet entry points. The idea was to

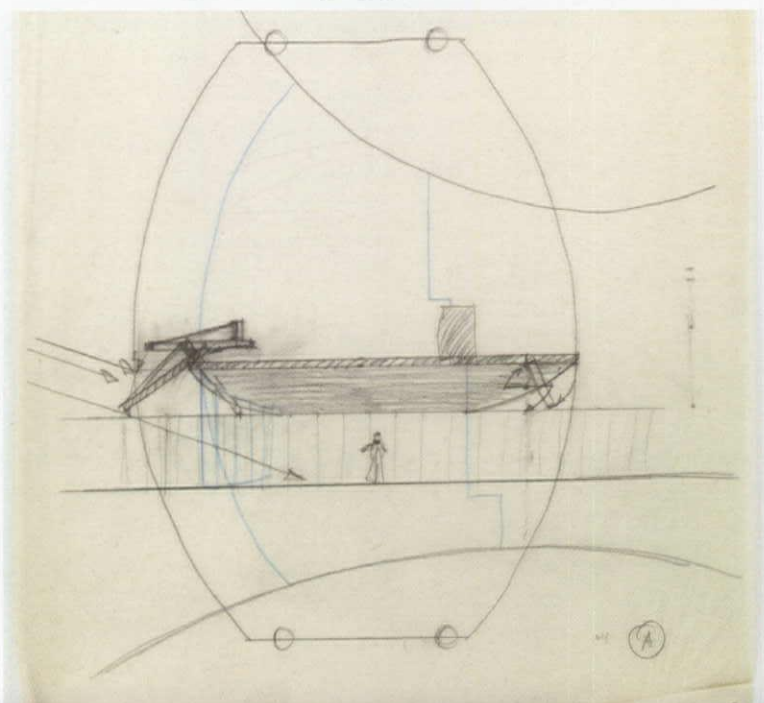
allow access to all mechanical and electrical systems, and water and gas lines, for maintenance, service and future replacement, without disturbing the house above.

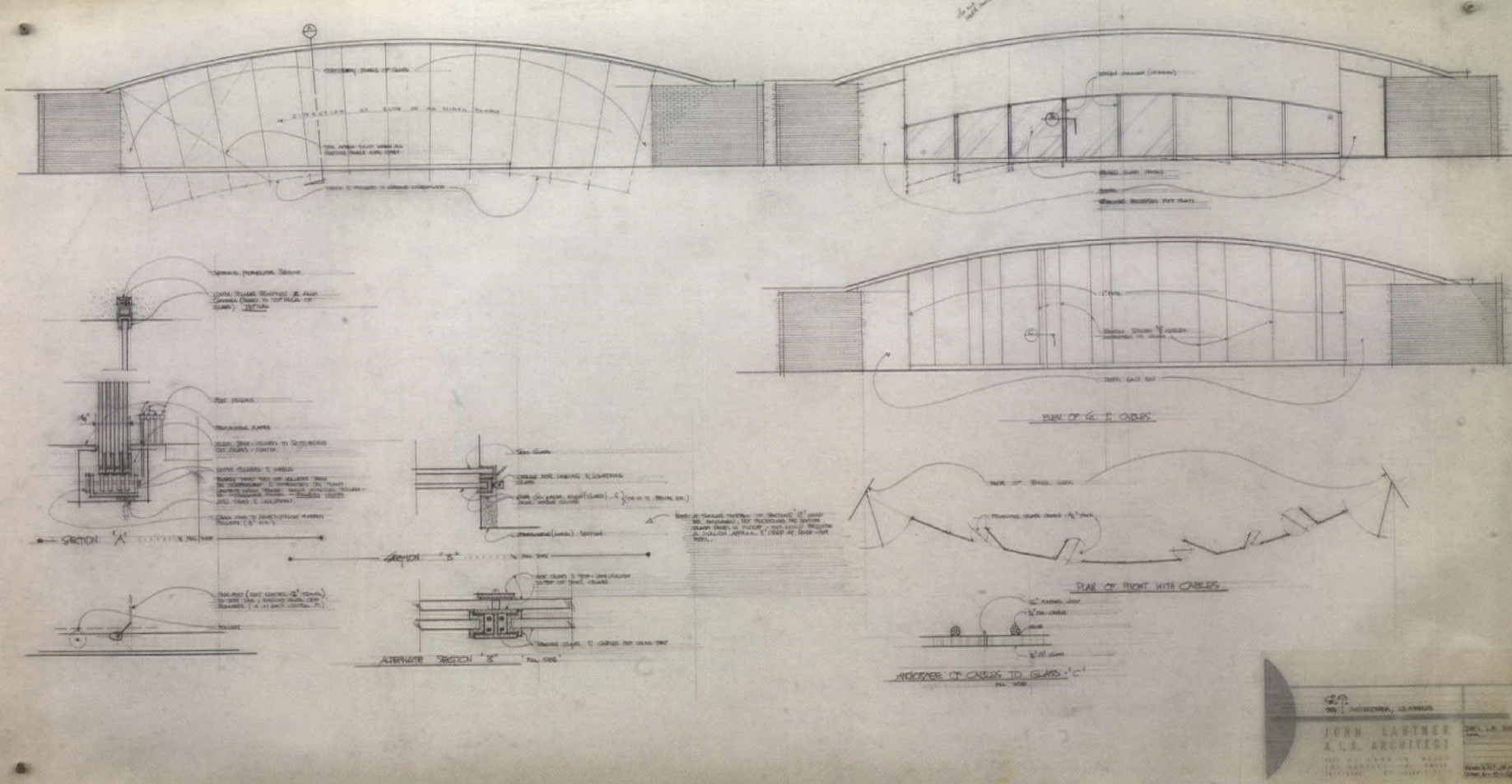
The house originally contained four separate water distribution systems: cold, non-potable water; separate, insulated and recirculating loops of cold drinking water (drawn from a cool underground storage tank); tempered water (approx. 110F); and hot water (approx. 180F). The house was to be heated and cooled via an 'air-floor': a system of shallow, 12" square domed metal elements placed between the structural slab and a concrete subfloor, that allowed conditioned air to move freely through this floor labyrinth, heating and cooling the floor slab, and venting at the perimeters of each space into the rooms.

During the design and construction process, the idea was born to use the house as a laboratory to develop innovative construction components. Kaynar would research and develop the building products, fund the expenses (an arrangement that Reiner successfully defended against the IRS), produce promising innovations for the construction industry, and thus would diversify its line of products.

A machine shop was set up for development on Apex Street, close to Fargo Street, where Reiner now lived (at the 'Bella Vista' estate at 1952 Rockford Road – across the lake from Silvertop). Many products were researched and developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s: hinged baseboards covered electrical outlets, and central vacuum inlets; a low voltage system with sweep controls (a product that was marketed commercially) was installed in the Formica door jambs; lights pivoted, like car lights, back into the walls when switched off. In the bathrooms, optic eye controls were used for water faucets (the norm years later); a bathtub was heated by coils of hot water circulating through the tub's sides; sinks were developed with the water supplied through the drain; a sink was made from 'lignum vitae', a wood used in ship building. In the kitchen, a stove and refrigerators on wheels would allow cooking in different places inside and outside the house.

Among other devices were window hardware allowing the various hinged windows to rotate 270 degrees. The glass was hung from the roof with hangers developed by the glass manufacturer (free-standing glass needs to be $\frac{1}{2}$ " - $\frac{3}{4}$ " or thicker to prevent it from buckling, while hanging glass could be thinner and less





expensive); pre-cast concrete scallops at the top edge of the glass cover the hardware. The original design for the large round skylight in the master bedroom (which had a skylight cover that could be raised and pivot out) later seemed impractical and was changed to the existing design with motorized, folding cork ceiling panels.

Various solutions for the moving glass of the living room wall were examined, from lowering the glass into the ground to gathering it, like a sculpture, inside the room. In the end, an operating mechanism for a sliding curved section of the glass wall was developed. Last, all wood siding materials on the house, both inside and out, were a Louisiana Cypress with a modified shiplap detail. The siding is installed with screws for rigidity and removability, with specially designed clips concealed in the lapped portion. The clips allowed the wood to be pre-finished and the siding to expand and move.

STRUCTURE AND EMOTION

In the late 1950s Lautner and Reiner traveled together to Mexico. There they met the German émigré artist Matthias Goeritz, a frequent collaborator of Luís Barragán and the leading proponent of the idea that architecture should carry emotional force. Arango would work with Lautner later on the gate to the Arango residence in Acapulco. The two travelers also met Felix Candela and visited several of his projects. Reiner had been introduced to Candela's work through a William Beckett design for the Kaynar factory with a hyperbolic paraboloid structure, and Lautner would have known of his work as early as May 1957, when a major exhibition of his work was held in Los Angeles. Candela had trained in Madrid, where, as a student, he observed the construction of Eduardo Torroja's roof for the Zarzuela race course – a series of thin vaulted shells cantilevering deeply over the stands. Candela, after the Spanish Civil War, emigrated in 1939 to Mexico, where he spent the first part of his career. His 1951 Cosmic Ray Building at the University of Mexico City, where he reduced the thickness of the

concrete shell to a hitherto unimaginable 5/8 inch (15 mm), brought international attention to his work.

His ongoing research into thin shell and hyperbolic paraboloid concrete structures – where the concrete formwork of complex curvatures is built entirely from flat boards, thus achieving fluent forms through relatively simple and inexpensive formwork – was widely noted. Similarly, Candela's work on concrete mushrooms, tilting the slabs and bending the symmetrical structures to their limits, opened entirely new worlds of formal explorations in concrete structure. Years later, Candela would collaborate with Lautner on the first (and unbuilt) version of the Bob Hope house in Palm Springs.

A second trip was made in the spring of 1960. Lautner and Reiner traveled to Europe researching new construction materials and methods. Stops were made in Portugal, Helsinki (where they visited Alvar Aalto's curved wall projects), Leningrad, Moscow, Vienna, Venice and Rome, where Lautner studied and photographed Pier Luigi Nervi's concrete structures for the Olympic Games later that summer.

Before their trip to Europe, Reiner and Lautner began a new project – the Midtown School, an independent non-profit day school for children aged three to thirteen. Established in 1958, it served 'families of diverse religious, racial, and economic backgrounds' residing in the Silver Lake and Los Feliz areas. Lautner helped to further refine the school's educational concept – learning by exploring – based on and closely tied to Reiner's old school in New York, as well as the school's environment, proposing a series of pre-fabricated wooden roof structures (manufactured by the same company that built the Chemosphere roof structure) that sat on foundation slabs 'floating' on the unstable site. Located initially at 2800 Rowena Avenue, the school was to occupy its new quarters in September 1960. (The campus is now the Alliance Française.)



THE HIATUS

It is often said that the construction of Silvertop bankrupted Ken Reiner. This is not correct. Reiner, an astute businessman, knew his financial limitations. There were two events out of Reiner's control that brought an end to the project. On August 7, 1961, Reiner and his business partner separated. For years they had run Kaynar carefully avoiding each other, entering the building from different doors, occupying offices at opposite ends of the sprawling factory, and meeting only once a week for dinner. Reiner was to keep Kaynar's hair clip production, the development and production of construction industry products, as well as Silvertop (technically owned by Kaynar); Reiner's partner was to keep the aircraft fastener business. Reiner's partner later, though, reneged on the royalty payments to Reiner. The second event was a costly divorce. By then, the shell and major part of the construction at Silvertop had been completed, and the Midtown School already built.

Construction on Silvertop continued until 1964, with builder Wally Niewiadomski installing interior finishes and the glass. But by 1964, Reiner started to experience financial difficulties. Work at Silvertop stopped. Landscape plans drawn up by Garrett Eckbo were abandoned. Zebert, who worked on some of Lautner's most important projects and who had managed the business side of the office in the last few years, left Lautner's office in mid-1964. At the time, the Sheats (now Sheats-Goldstein) House was complete, and the ambitious Alto Capistrano project – a utopian and car-less city for ten thousand people, where inhabitants would move by funicular from the commercial zones below to the dwellings sprouting like trees on the hills above, and on which Lautner had worked for a decade – was abandoned.

By the early 1970s, the aerospace industry and the California economy in general had further declined. It was then that aerospace engineer Leonard Malin was forced to sell his house, the Chemosphere. The Midtown School was operated until the early 1970s. In September 1973, Reiner's company went bankrupt. The courts sold Silvertop. But Lautner's office had entered a new phase. Following Silvertop, where he explored the possibilities of reinforced concrete to shape space and structure – its malleability and strength, its weight and its lightness – major and highly innovative new projects came: the Elrod House in Palm Springs, the Stevens House in Malibu, and, in particular, the Arango House in Acapulco

and the first version of the Hope House, which was originally conceived with structural engineer Felix Candela as a great mound of concrete, a structure that was changed to a less elegant steel structure. Other larger projects – the Newport Research Center, or the Griffith Park Nature Center Building – remained unbuilt. In 1971, Lautner was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. (F.A.I.A.)

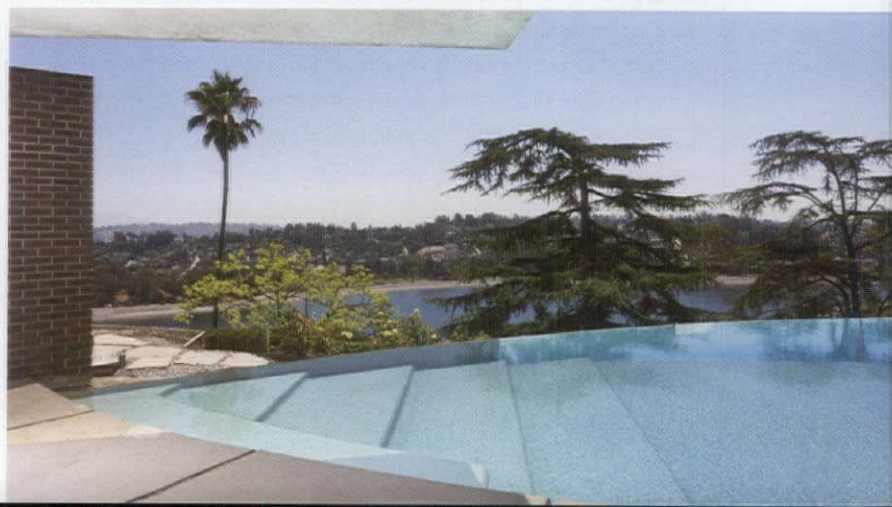
THE HOUSE COMES TO LIFE

In the years that Silvertop sat empty it was a local draw: people crawled up the hill to explore the unfinished carapace. Not only was the house unfinished – it was vandalized. When Philip and Jacklyn Burchill saw the house for the first time, much of the electrical infrastructure had been stolen, the glass in the living room was shattered, the unfinished pool was filled with old furniture. Seeing past the layers of debris and the daunting task of completing the project, recognizing the majesty and importance of the building, the Burchills decided to become the stewards of the house.

The Burchills, too, came to Los Angeles from other places. Jacklyn Burchill, a Stanford-educated child-psychologist, came from San Francisco. Dr. Philip Burchill, a Navy man, physician, a passionate astronomer and botanist, grew up in Wisconsin – Frank Lloyd Wright country and a four-hour drive from Lautner's native Marquette. And like Reiner before them, the Burchills had lived a few blocks away from Silvertop. By the early 1970s, Dr. Burchill was a successful physician and might be expected to move to a more conventionally smart neighborhood of Los Angeles. Instead, not wanting to leave behind the view of Silver Lake, the Burchills moved up the hill.

An extraordinary amount of work was needed to turn the shell into a house. Lautner and his office returned to complete the project. Glass walls were re-installed, as were electrical and mechanical systems. Some changes were made to the floorplan to better accommodate the new owners' needs. A kitchen was installed where an incinerator had been planned (with preliminary plans drawn up by Judith Lautner, working at the time with her father) and a handsome library, an intimate space beside the cavernous living room, built where the kitchen had been planned.

The house became a home, a graceful residence filled with books, art and music. For years the Burchills hosted chamber music concerts there. From the entrance, a space leads towards the house's center. Light enters on the left through a small enclosed atrium. To the right is the bedroom wing: two bedrooms, the children's rooms, with a bathroom of terrazzo and wood and cork; the extraordinary master bedroom, where motorized louvers and cork ceiling panels pivot and slide and move to turn the sheltered



sleeping cave into a glass pavilion open to views; a dressing room with the most ingenious closets and niches and drawers; and bathroom of green terrazzo and marble beneath motorized sliding glass panels, all of these spaces aligned behind a curved wall of brown brick. At the opposite end of the house a second wall screens off a music room and other spaces.

Between the two curved walls and under the concrete vault, atop its hill and beneath the sky, exists one of the most exciting moments of Twentieth Century architecture: a magnificent soaring space with glass walls facing to the east – the lake, the mountains, downtown – and glass walls facing to the west – Hollywood, the ocean, the setting sun. During a panel discussion for the John Lautner Foundation in 1995, Dr. Burchill was asked what living at Silvertop had meant to him. 'It was good', he said after some thought, 'for my ego'.

Sources:

Foreword: 'What is Silvertop?', tour booklet, Ken Reiner and John Lautner, 1960
 R. M. Schindler, Architekt; August Sarnitz, Christian Branstetter Verlag, Wien, 1986
 Interview FE with John Lautner 1992 - 1994
 Interview FE with Ken Reiner 10.17.2000
 Interview FE with Guy Zebert 10. 27. 2000
 Letters Louis Wiehle, Herb Greene, Paul Bogart, Guy Zebert; excerpts published in Journal of the Taliesin Fellows; Issue 18; summer 1995, edited FE
 Structural engineering records, The John Lautner Archive, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
 Durability of A Notable Concrete Project; James Warner and Edward K. Rice; ACI Concrete Institute; August 1997

















FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1" = 10'



2138 Micheltorena Street – Silver Lake District, Los Angeles California



Details & Information at: architectureforsale.com/silvertop



Walter M. Cecil

Fine Oriental Rugs

Acquisition, Appraisal and Consulting since 1971.

walter.cecil@ethnographica.com

(415) 370-5450

Antique Dragon Verneh
Karabahn Region, Azerbaijan
Wool & Cotton / All Natural Dyes
10' x 12'



GRANT MUDFORD

Photographs from the 1970s

ROSAMUND FELSEN GALLERY

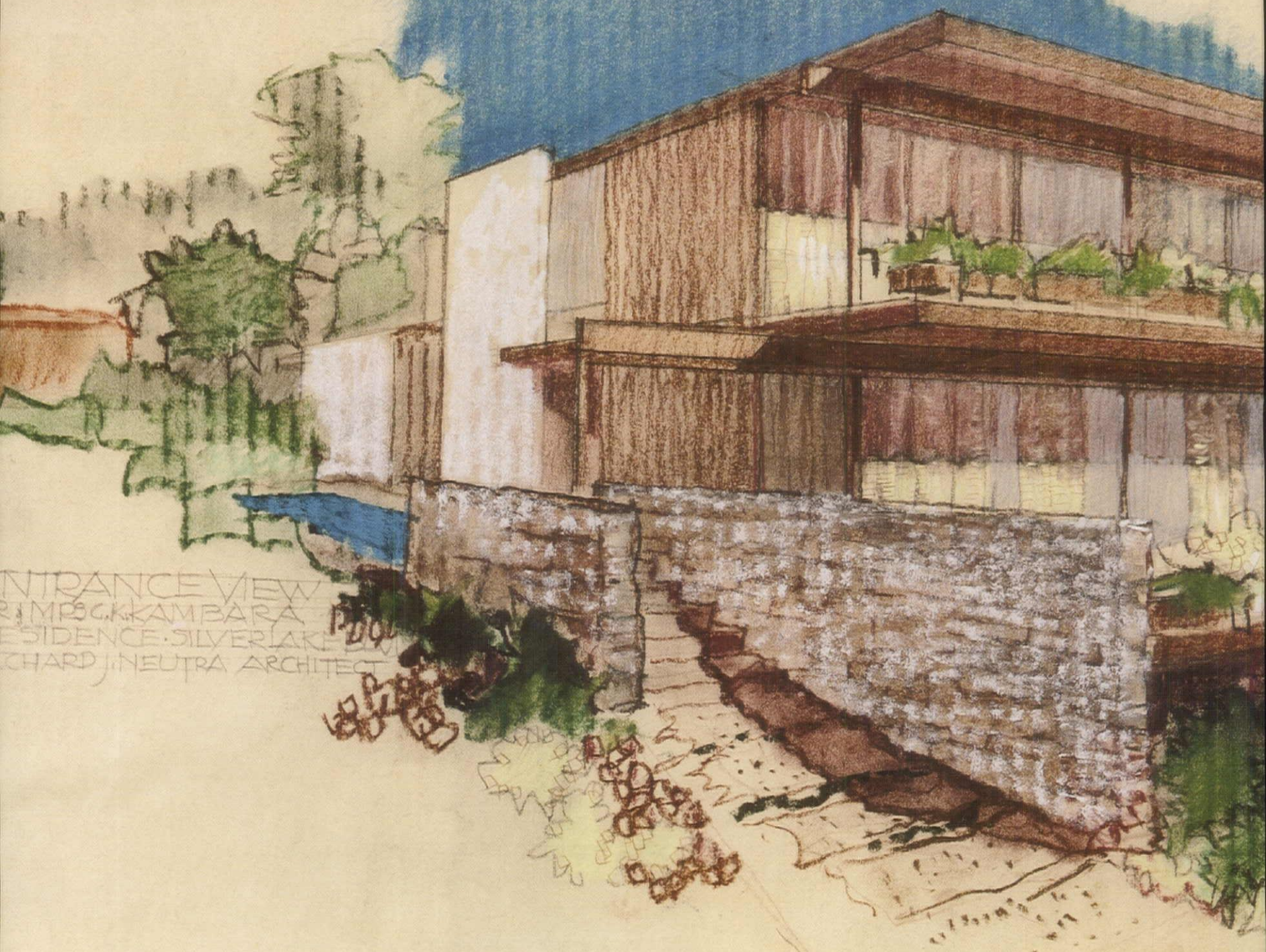
Bergamot Station B4

2525 Michigan Ave, Santa Monica, CA 90404

310 828 8488 rosamund@rosamundfelsen.com

The Kambara House In Neutra's Silverlake Colony

— Barbara Lamprecht



ENTRANCE VIEW
RIMPSCK KAMBARA
RESIDENCE SILVERLAKE
RICHARD J. NEUTRA ARCHITECT



KAMBARA
FROM N-W



It is rare to find a house designed by Richard Neutra (1892 – 1970) in absolutely original condition. Still rarer to find it beautifully maintained. Rarest of all to learn that it is a member of Neutra's fabled "Silverlake Colony." And while his ubiquitous use of silver paint on trim is well known, beyond rare is the existence of a silver wall. The wall stands in the Kambara House.

Completed in 1961, the Kambara House is one of nine dwellings Richard J. Neutra designed between 1948 and 1961 as an integrated group in Silverlake, Los Angeles. After 53 years, it is being sold by the original Japanese-American family who commissioned it. In the Colony, Neutra's intention was to demonstrate how his unique "kit of parts" could be manipulated so that a group of houses shared a unified theme without compromising an individual identity for each house. Visiting them reveals just how profoundly Neutra carried this idea through. Yes, there are elements and strategies in common throughout weaving the Colony together, but each residence is almost strikingly different in its spatial sequences, layout, materials (whether included or left out, or used in some new way), colors, and overall feeling. Neutra wasn't kidding.

The story of the Colony is fascinating. In the late 1940s, Neutra teamed up with Holger Fog, a Danish nursery man and friend, to develop land to his design, ensuring commissions and publicity. It wasn't the first time Neutra co-partnered with another investor and acted as architect; that was in 1937, with the eight-unit Strathmore Apartments in Westwood, now listed at the state level of significance in the National Register of Historic Places.

On Fog's behalf, Neutra purchased choice property comprising nine lots on hills rising on the east side of the Silverlake reservoir, a block from VDL Research House I, the original Neutra family home and office practice. Some houses, such as the 1948 Treweek and Sokol houses, are roughly on the same grade as the reservoir. Others, including the Kambara, are situated above, following the two-way slope rising both to the south and the east. For each lot purchased, the owner agreed that Neutra would design the residence. If construction had not commenced within two years, he would sell it back to Neutra and Fog with a minor upcharge. George and May Kambara were successful in choosing their lot: their request was a bit earlier than that of the Inadomis, Neutra acknowledged in a letter, who also wanted the upper of two elevated adjacent lots. Indeed, in all the Colony the Kambara House has perhaps the best advantage: easy proximity to the street; a bit removed from Silverlake Boulevard; and high enough to permit a very fine, open view of the horizon and the hills across the lake through the copses of trees.





Circa 1961

The Kambara and Inadomi houses (whose owners did not know one another though both were of Japanese-American heritage) share many elements. Neutra designed them virtually at the same time, and each was developed and overseen by two of his most talented project architects: the Kambara under Sergei Koschin, a White Russian aristocrat who was the on-site City of Moscow liaison for Le Corbusier's famous Centrosoyuz building of the mid 1930s; and the Inadomi, to the north, by the equally talented John Blanton, a graduate of Rice University. The two men had a deep regard for one another's work, which can be seen today in the careful relationship between the houses. At the street, the houses share a common entrance, a series of broad asymmetric concrete landings and steps. An offset in the steps forces one to slow down, to pay attention, an homage to the transition between leaving the street and entering private territory. This subtle nuance of slowing down was enhanced by Neutra's keen appreciation for the science behind the human sensory, cognitive, and perceptive systems, especially the human sense of balance. He witnessed this synthesis of the body, architecture, and landscape in many scenarios, but profoundly in Kyoto's aristocratic gardens and villas, walking in the rain, he wrote to his wife, Dione, during his round-the-world trip in 1930. That overriding concern for the body in space begins with the steps but unfolds through every aspect of the Kambara design, resulting in a composition that is both fluid and strong.

Another of Neutra's concerns was scale, implemented here very subtly, seen even in how stone, a tawny Palos Verdes, is handled. The entrance diverges at a large two-level planter that separates the individual staircases to each house. The lower level originally contained a reflecting pool, introducing a cooling micro-climate that was another step in the transition from street to home. The upper level of the planter steps back, following the slope of the hill. Anchoring the composition to the earth, the lower northern wall of the Kambara is similarly clad. Similar . . . but not identical. A closer look reveals that each of the three expressions of this ashlar masonry is slightly different. Smaller, more horizontal stones are used in the top planter, with larger, slightly more irregular stones included in the bottom planter, and a mixture of the two sizes with even larger stones at the north base of the Kambara. Again, here is a demonstration of the mastery in scale, calibrated to sensual physical experience and to the size of the objects—the planter and the much bigger residence. "Constant subtle change," Neutra called it, while today we might call it a prescient implementation of fractal mathematics applied to environmental psychology.

Originally the metal railing only began its upward run at the top of the planter, giving the Kambara and Inadomi children plenty of opportunity to cut corners; as the parents aged, the railing was continued to the bottom of the planter. At the top Koschin terminated the rail with a semi-circular flourish, a nod to play.



2014

The L – shaped Kambara continues to reveal itself as a series of sequences, terraces, rhythms, and layers rising with the slope. At every turn, wood or steel elements reach out to the landscape as “structural tentacles”, as Neutra referred to his extensions and spider legs. Materials are continued from inside to outside, such as the light yellow painted stucco on a rear upper wall carried into the interior with only glass mediating the transition. At the sheltered entrance to the house, the terrazzo flows into the vestibule, another area where indoors and out are interwoven. Once pass the front door, to the right is a handsome study. On the left, a guest bathroom thoughtfully includes a door to the rear garden, a good touch that adds flexibility, especially for kids at play or for a gardener needing a break. (Initially a simple lawn was planted in the rear while a pool was contemplated; a public-type water fountain was another unusual touch intended to keep the thirsty sated without traipsing indoors. Later, the area was just landscaped under Blanton’s direction using Neutra’s plant specifications.) Beyond the entry area is a short, tall wall facing the visitor, defining a fork in the road: one chooses to enter the large carpeted family area, with its open kitchen and informal gathering spaces, or the living room. Behind the wall, protected from view, lies the dining room.

This wall is key to controlling spatial flow. Early sketches show no such wall, allowing for far more visual access anywhere, as

though undirected space were wandering about willy-nilly. Although Neutra and his team didn’t apply feng-shui, the change to include this pivotal piece meets a key principle in the philosophy by structuring (not confining) space, protecting the interior from the entrance. The dining area beyond the wall acts as an interstitial mediator between private family on the east and public living on the west. Like the entire house, it is quietly alive with flexibility. On the living area side, full-height walnut panels slide open so diners can partake of the trees, the lake, and the sky; on the family side, part of the full-height cabinetry—birch stained to harmonize but not attempt to replicate the walnut—slides open as inconspicuous pass-throughs. This wall terminates with a silver wall concealing a major load-bearing column and reinforcement. As ever, for Neutra, every element has to work hard for its money, usually addressing aesthetics and function simultaneously. In the front of the house, a slender metal pipe both secures privacy panels, drains water, and ever so slightly, asymmetrically breaks the façade; it matters compositionally that the pipe extends up beyond the roofline.

From the entrance, stepping toward the spacious living room is to be instantly connected to nature. Overlooking the lake, the entire west wall is full-height glass, either fixed or operable sliders, a gesture that wraps the end walls for a short distance. These end jalousie units set up a secondary axis for ventilation, but also permits the Neutra-preferred long diagonal vista from the entrance

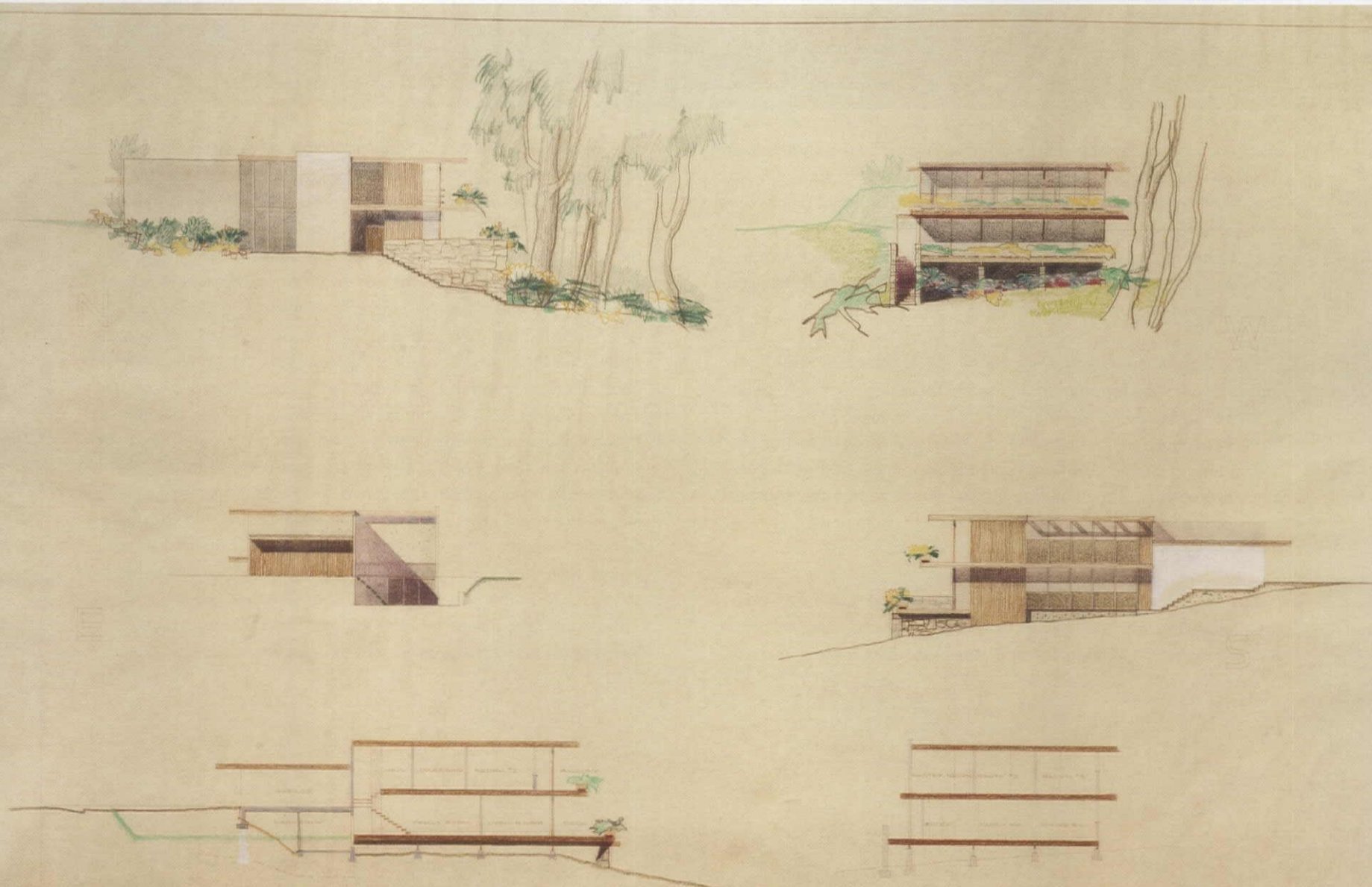
who despite his respect for Neutra, knew what he wanted. Per long-standing Neutra practice, the process began with the "client interrogation" in which underlying wishes, needs, and motivations were gently but methodically teased out, husband and wife writing essays independently. (No cheating !) This time, however, the interrogation began in person. The accomplished doctor wrote later that the meeting with Neutra, three job captains, and a grad student taking notes "was as scary as any interviews I had in universities, medical schools... but they quickly put us at ease."

At the time, Neutra and his partner on commercial projects, the noted architect and urban planner Robert Alexander, were designing the Los Angeles County Hall of Records, one of about 20 projects in this banner year of 1961. Neutra had somehow persuaded county officials to hire a famous eye physiologist from the East Coast, Dr. Francis Adler, to assist in finding ways to calibrate light on behalf of the well-being and productivity of the many clerical workers there. When Neutra discovered that the doctor was not only an ophthalmologist but that he also knew Adler, an immediate rapport led to many a discussions on vision and the physiognomy of the eye, a passionate topic for both. Both were photographers, another arena for the eye, and thus Neutra designed a darkroom for him as well.

The doctor's study, also overlooking the lake, is a well-equipped refuge. Here, walls of built-in cabinetry, book shelves, and desk areas in book-matched walnut share two trademark Neutra designs.

First, there is no hardware on the drawers to distract the eye from smooth, consistent planes or to create awkward areas to clean. Rather, angled undercuts provide handholds. Second, the front of the intermediate vertical members of the bookshelves, acting to stiffen the units, were recessed and shaved a little on both sides at shallow angles. This strategy means the horizontal shelves read more emphatically, while the verticals are suppressed. Both "minor" details are employed to maintain the fluidity of the space.

These details are repeated upstairs in the master and children's bedrooms and baths. Throughout, there are brilliant moves that make daily life easier, such as a sudden curved wall near the recessed phone cabinet, a place that once generated a lot of interaction for the Kambara teenagers. The children's bathroom is a tour de force of spatial ingenuity, permitting multiple uses while preserving privacy and a little wiggle room. The bedroom for the two younger girls is particularly interesting. Two desks sit below the casement-and-fixed window wall. One has to look twice to see that one desk is larger than the other, befitting an older girl's heavier school load. Those windows, however, proved to be the only real test of faith for client and architect. Deferring to the privacy of the Yew house owners next door to the south, Kambara graciously agreed to forfeit five more feet than required for the side setback. Neutra's team suggested that the boundary be further obscured with translucent glass in the girls' room. Kambara refused, saying he was "happy to have windows for my children." He also refused a roof projection, as it would darken the room. Kambara opted for a trellis above and





2014

plenty of plantings between the houses. The care for brightness and Neutra's adage of "constant subtle change" may explain the many shades of light colors here. There are no less than eight colors used on walls and ceiling, shades of pale yellow, whites, and greys complemented by "Neutra brown." The colors animate the room as a series of planes, a Neutra motif, rather than volumes, assisting the quality of spatial continuity.

The house is an incantation of familiar Neutra strategies in illumination: strip lighting embedded in the exterior ground floor soffit above the living room terrace, enlarging space at night; the lighting encased in the upper floor's stair wall; the bi-directional soffit lighting washing both upper and lower walls of the master bedroom boudoir above a large mirror. Attention to other senses was not forgotten, seen in extra insulation in walls near mechanical units or bathrooms to baffle sound.

Not surprisingly, under Neutra's guidance, the Kambaras were meticulous in choosing the new furnishings, fabrics, and finishes for their home. All the latest – and sturdiest – in furniture, kitchen

appliances, window coverings, and lighting. For example, there are five satin aluminum "hour glass" wall fixtures by Litecraft and spun fiberglass-and-aluminum fixtures by Holiday, all in perfect condition and all now mid-century collectibles. There is even a fine intercom system with unblemished instructions. The Kambaras commissioned two Camel Tables from Neutra, one walnut wood, for the living area, and another, of walnut Formica, in the dining area where harder and daily use was in store. Both were built by none other than the gentle Fordyce ("Red") Marsh, one of Neutra's best contractors, who often built the tables commissioned by clients. The Kambaras were equally fastidious in maintaining the history of their adventures with Neutra, Koschin, and Blanton. They were their own archive. Every piece of correspondence, material sample, mid-century product brochure, invoice, check, magazine article, schematic and construction sketches and drawing and exquisite full-color rendering, are all preserved. This is not the first time I have seen such rigorous care in Neutra's clients; in fact, it seems to have been the norm for much of the "Greatest Generation." Thus, from fabric swatch to the fabric of the building itself, the Kambara House embodies stewardship at every scale.

All Black & White Photography By: Amir Farr, Richard and Dion Neutra papers at UCLA Library Special Collections



Circa 1961

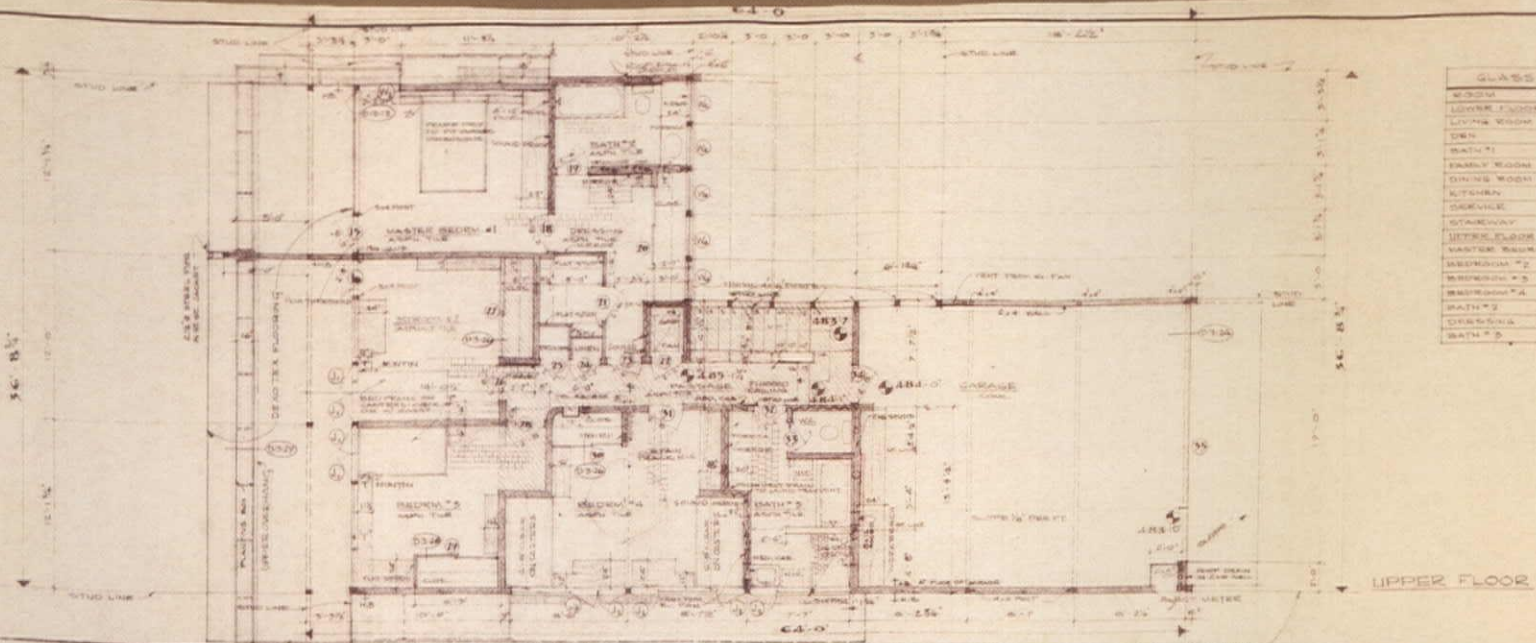


2014

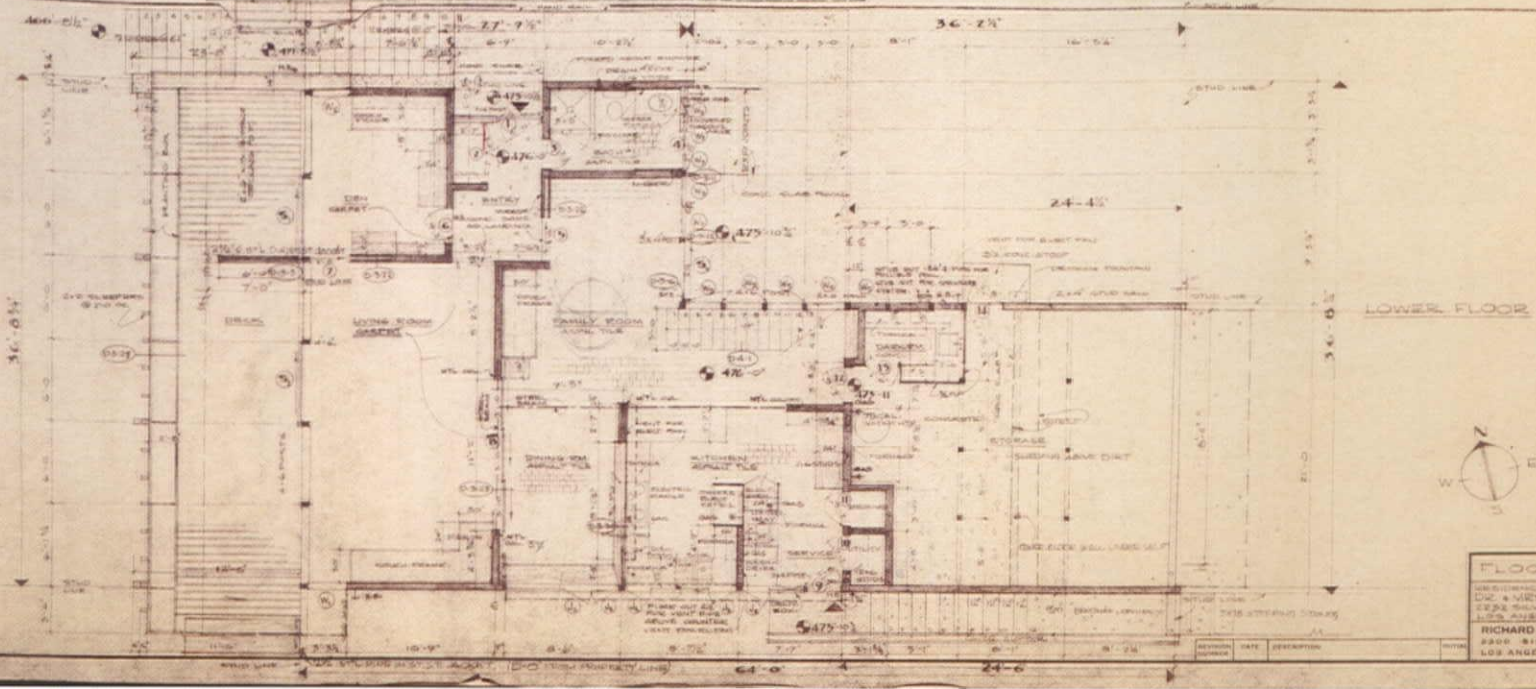








GLASS & VENT SCHEDULE (CONT)			
ROOM	PL AREA	AREA	PERCENT
LIVING ROOM	350	170	48
DINING ROOM	170	100	59
KITCHEN	170	80	47
BREAKFAST ROOM	170	70	41
BEDROOM #1	170	50	29
BEDROOM #2	170	50	29
BATH #1	170	10	6
BATH #2	170	10	6
STAIRWAY	170	10	6
TERRACE	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #2	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #3	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #4	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #5	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #6	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #7	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #8	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #9	170	10	6
SCREENED PORCH #10	170	10	6



FLOOR PLANS			
DESIGNED FOR	MR. & MRS. G. H. KALBAR	DATE	12-1-54
2222 HOLLYWOOD BLVD.	LOS ANGELES, CALIF.	INTERIOR	12-1-54
RICHARD J. NEUTRA, F.A.A. ARCHITECT			
2200 SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD			
LOS ANGELES, CAL. PHONE NO. 8194			



2232 Silver Lake Boulevard – Los Angeles



Details & Information at: kambararesidence.com

PUBLIC WORK, Lines of Desire: PETER SHIRE

A+D MUSEUM 11.8.2014-1.31.2015

PUBLIC WORK is the first exhibition to focus exclusively on L.A. based artist Peter Shire's public and private architectural commissions. Executed over the course of three decades, the architectural works demonstrate Shire's understanding of the formal principles of twentieth century art and architecture collided with his interrogations of popular culture and the vocabulary of visual design. Plying graphic forms and structural geometry with radically saturated colors, Shire's architectural constructions are high-voltage improvisations of artistic legacy and traditional architectural platforms. The resulting works exuberantly transform space and environment.

The exhibition charts Shire's commissions from his first public entry in the 1984 Olympics (Los Angeles), to a 1990 sculptural installation commissioned by Sapporo Corporation, Hokkaido, Japan, to the most recent 2012 River Park, Ventura County public art installation. This creative journey will highlight architectural models and sculptural elements, ideation sketches, finished drawings and paintings, and varied objects of inspiration that have functioned as source material and propelled Shire's imagistic installations.

Spanning a career of path-breaking interventions and showcasing Shire's cross-disciplinary approach to materials and art categories, the architectural commissions exalt the blending of "fine" and "applied" art. They celebrate Shire's knowledge and production of ceramics, furniture, sculpture, drawing and painting, as all are essential attributes that potentially inform Shire's architectural work and artistic vision.

A+D ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
MUSEUM > LOS ANGELES

6032 WILSHIRE BLVD
LOS ANGELES CA 90036

323.932.9393

INFO@APLUSD.ORG
WWW.APLUSD.ORG

SPECIAL THANKS

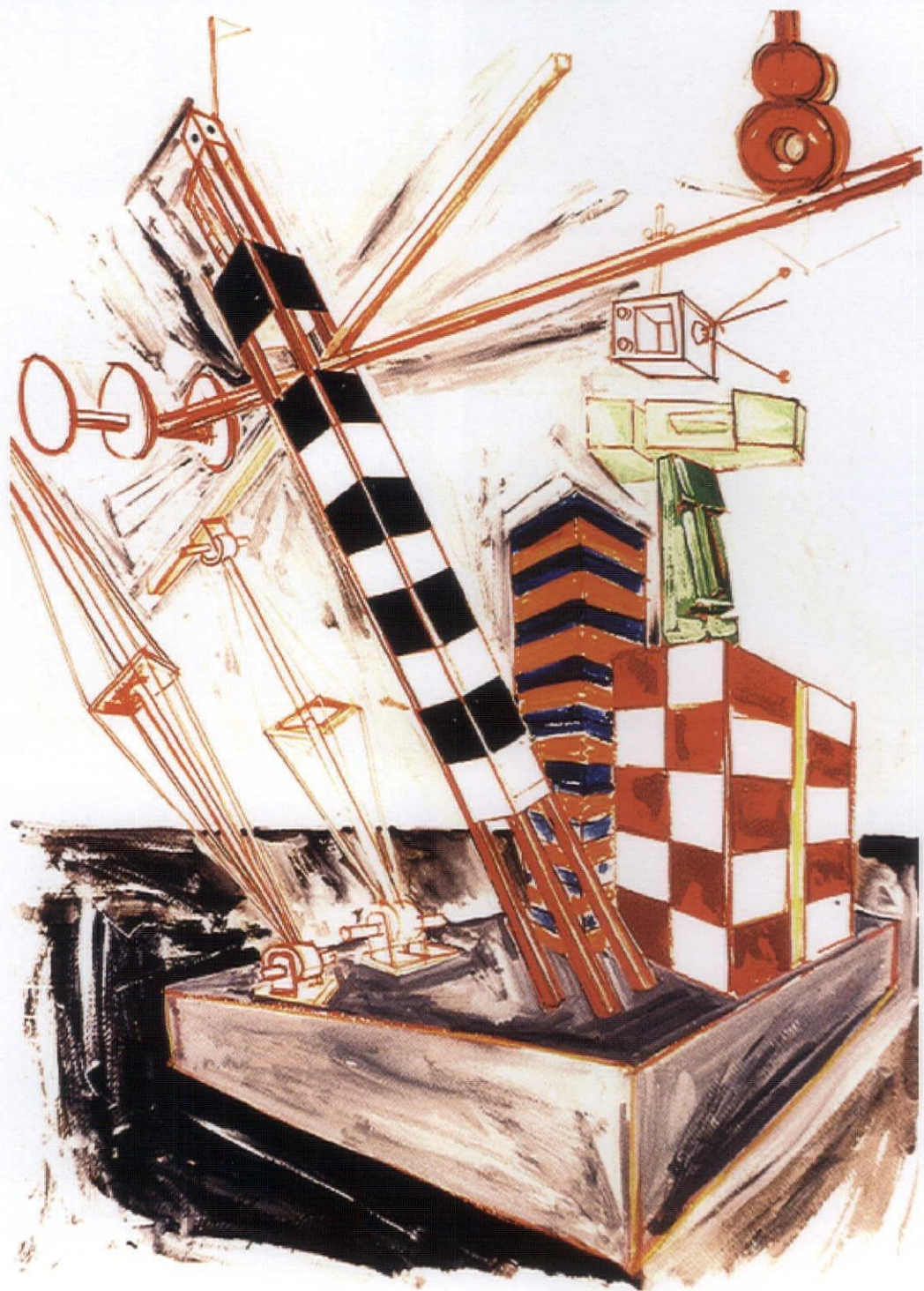
THE BOARDMAN FAMILY
FOUNDATION

MARY P. COQUILLARD

THE ALAN MANDELL FAMILY

MARVIN & JUDITH ZEIDLER

**ALL COAST
CONSTRUCTION**



on the market at architectureforsale.com™



#752
Pasadena, CA

Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect
\$3,950,000



#1044
Los Angeles, CA

Richard Neutra, Architect
\$2,300,000



#1022
Ojai, CA

Paul R. Williams, Architect
\$6,950,000



#1039
Willoughby Hills, OH

Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect
\$1,700,000



#984
Linwood, NJ

Mathias Kauten, Architect
\$449,000



#1025
Pasadena, CA

Greene & Greene, Architects
\$2,845,000



#967
Fontainebleau, near Paris

1970s Design Residence
\$2,002,000



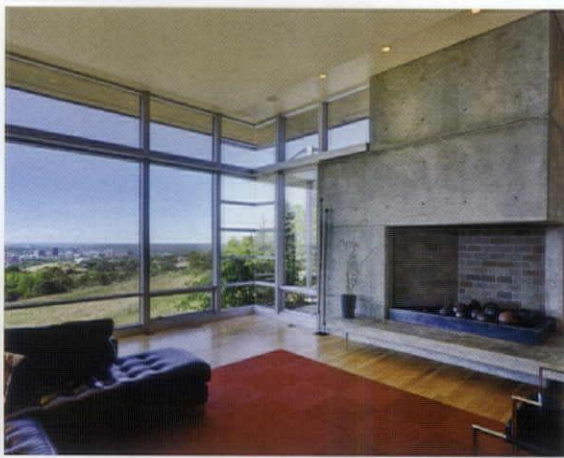
#1035
Meadowbrook, PA

Hugh Newell Jacobsen, Architect
\$1,800,000

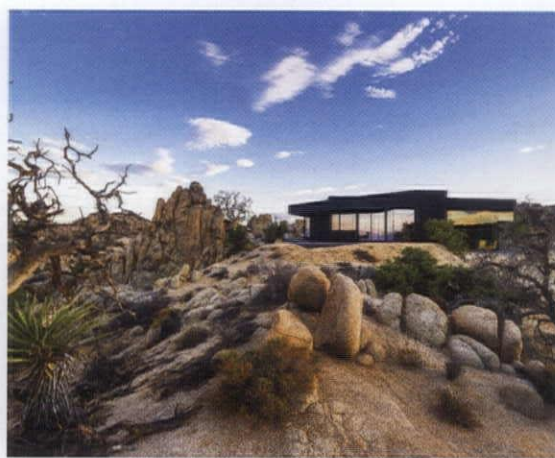


#969
near Bordeaux, France

Pierre-L Martin, Architect
\$1,564,000



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



#1033 Marc Atlan Design with Oller & Pejic Architects
Yucca Valley, CA \$975,000



#970 Raphaëlle Segond, Architect
French Riviera, France \$4,902,000



#956 Clifford Welch, A.I.A.
Dallas, TX \$1,950,000



#1007 Philip Johnson, F.A.I.A.
Madison, CT \$1,950,000



#1017 Cliff May Design
La Habra Heights, CA \$2,449,000



#1000 Walter Gropius & The Architects' Collaborative
Brooklin, ME \$1,990,000



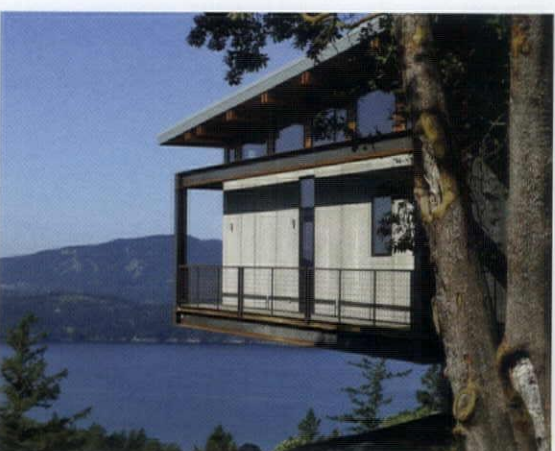
#858 Olson Kundig Architects
Bellevue, ID \$2,750,000



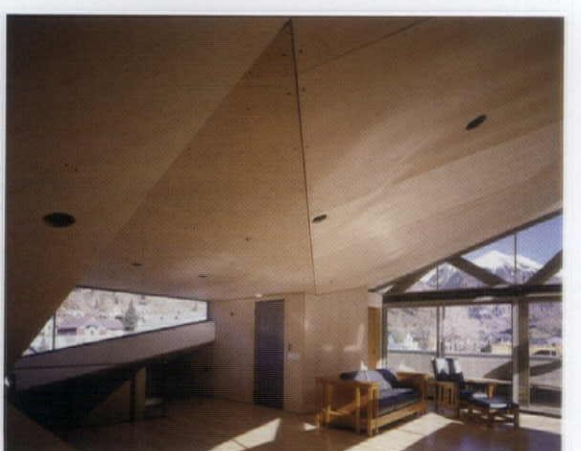
#1004 St. Croix Dome
Christiansted, Virgin Islands \$1,499,000



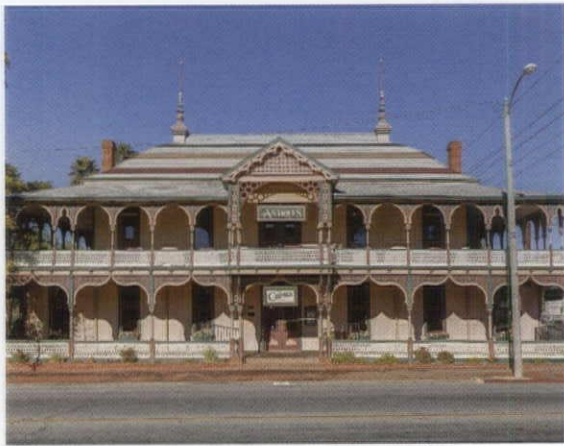
#1003 Tom Kundig, Architect
Seattle, WA \$3,995,000



#1012 Indigo Architecture & Design
Eastsound, WA \$2,895,000



#902 Smith-Miller & Hawkinson, Architects
Telluride, CO Package: \$4,375,000



#955
Lake Elsinore, CA

Frank Ferris, Architect
\$695,000



#929
Anacortes, WA

Richard T. Broderick, A.I.A.
\$1,195,000



#1042
Hudson Valley, NY

Michael Bell, 2007 – Glass House
\$1,950,000



#995
New Canaan, CT

Philip Johnson, Architect
\$2,795,000



#959
Branford, FL

Valentino Agnoli, Architect
\$550,000



#353
Roxbury, CT

Modern Country Villa
\$4,800,000



#1040
Armonk, NY

Roy Johnson, Architect
\$3,500,000



#1047
Genova, Italy

Gino Coppede, Architect
\$4,900,000



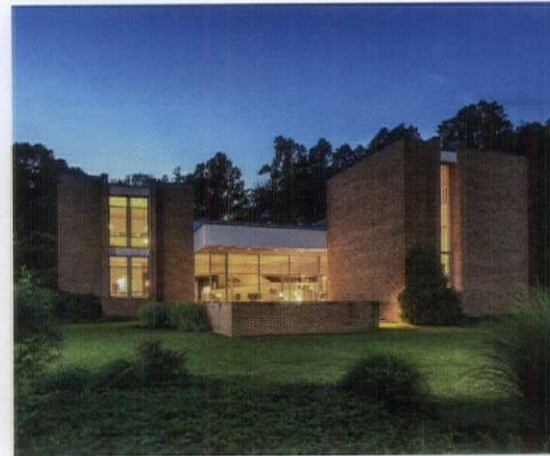
#1014
Starksboro, VT

Malcolm M. Appleton, Architect
\$550,000



#1032
Glencoe, IL

Edward Dart, AIA
\$2,490,000



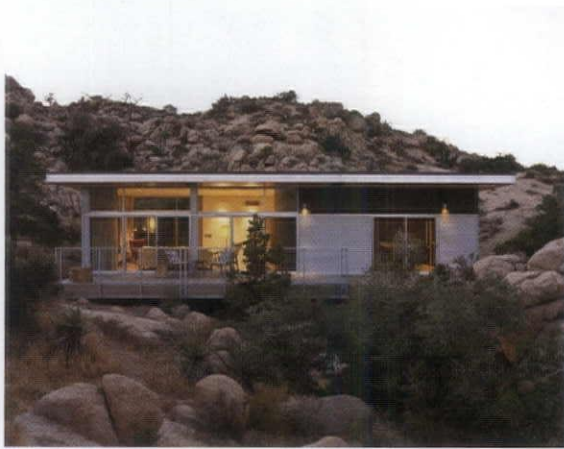
#987
New Canaan, CT

Ulrich Franzen, Architect
\$5,500,000



#1019
River Forest, IL

Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect
\$1,699,000



#1041
Yucca Valley, CA
Blue Sky Building Systems
\$675,000



#1031
Palm Springs, CA
Charles Dubois, A.I.A.
\$1,079,000



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



#1021
Chappaqua, NY
Myron Goldfinger, Architect
\$4,000,000



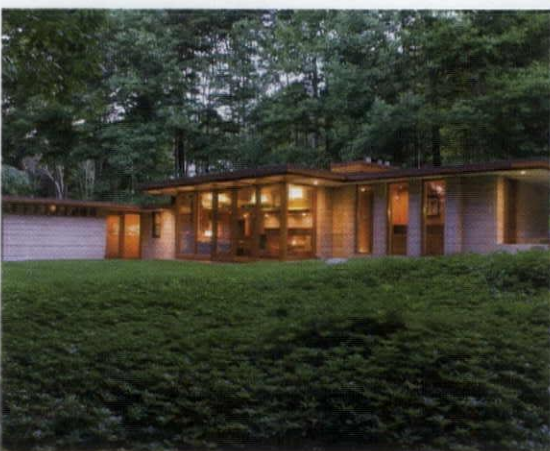
#1006
Mount Kisco, NY
Richard Meier, F.A.I.A.
\$3,495,000



#1013
Darien, CT
Edward Durell Stone, Architect
\$1,600,000



#1030
Bryn Athyn, PA
Richard Neutra, Architect
\$5,400,000



#758
Weston, CT
Allan Gelbin Design
\$1,588,888



#1016
Stuart, FL
James Yates, Architect
\$4,995,000



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



#950
Cold Spring, NY
River Architects
\$1,600,000



#1001 **Scott Hughes, A.I.A. Hughes-Umbanhowar Architects**
Stuart, FL
\$7,350,000

MAK CENTER FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE AT THE SCHINDLER HOUSE



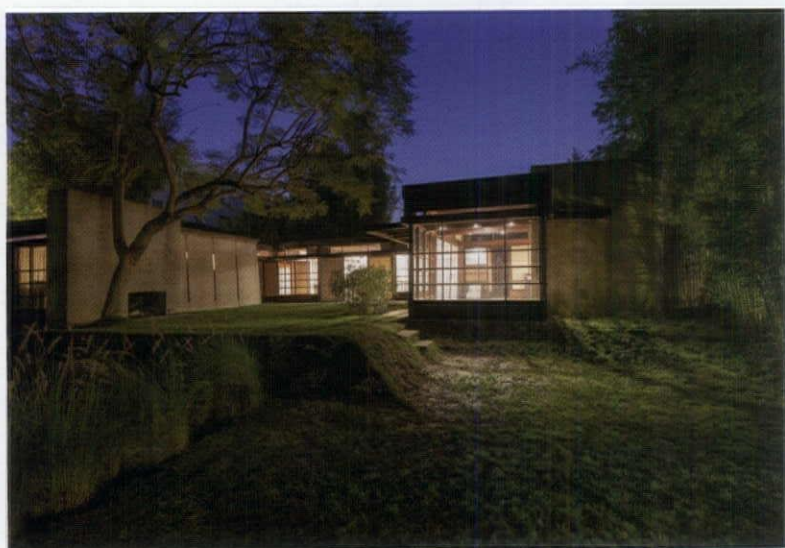
THE MAK CENTER FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE, L.A. is a contemporary, experimental, multi-disciplinary center for art and architecture that operates from architect Rudolph M. Schindler's own House and Studio (1922) in West Hollywood. Established in 1994 as a branch of MAK Vienna in an alliance between MAK, the Republic of Austria and Friends of the Schindler House in West Hollywood, the MAK Center produces a year-round schedule of exhibitions, lectures, performances, and publications. It also hosts an international residency program for visiting artists and architects.

The MAK Center at the Schindler House is located at **835 North Kings Road, West Hollywood, CA 90069**

For information on current and upcoming events, visit **MAKcenter.org** or call (323) 651-1510

THE SCHINDLER HOUSE ON KINGS ROAD

DESIGNED AND BUILT BY SCHINDLER IN 1921-22 AS LIVE/WORK SPACE FOR TWO FAMILIES—his own and friend and engineer Clyde Chace's—the Schindler House redefined notions of public and private spheres. As a result of its innovative program for communal modern living, the house became a site of forward-thinking aesthetic, cultural, and political activity throughout the 1920s-50s. It is the mission of the MAK Center to continue the conversation initiated by Schindler by creating and supporting programming that explores the dynamic intersections of art, architecture, and culture.



SCHINDLER HOUSE (R.M. Schindler, 1922)
© MAK Center / Photo by Joshua White

PROGRAMMING

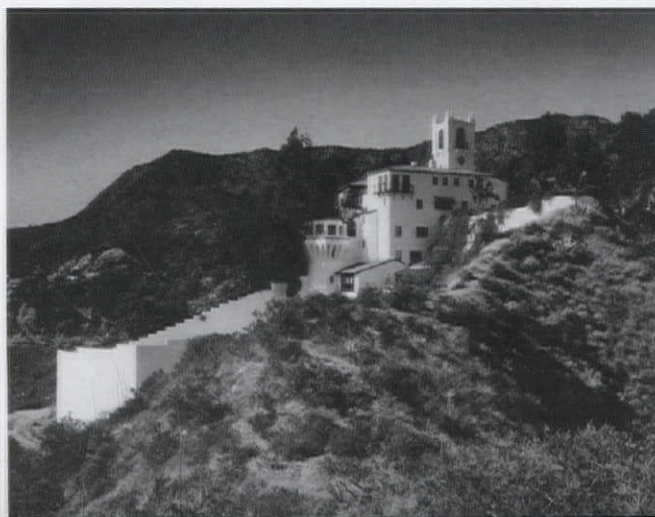
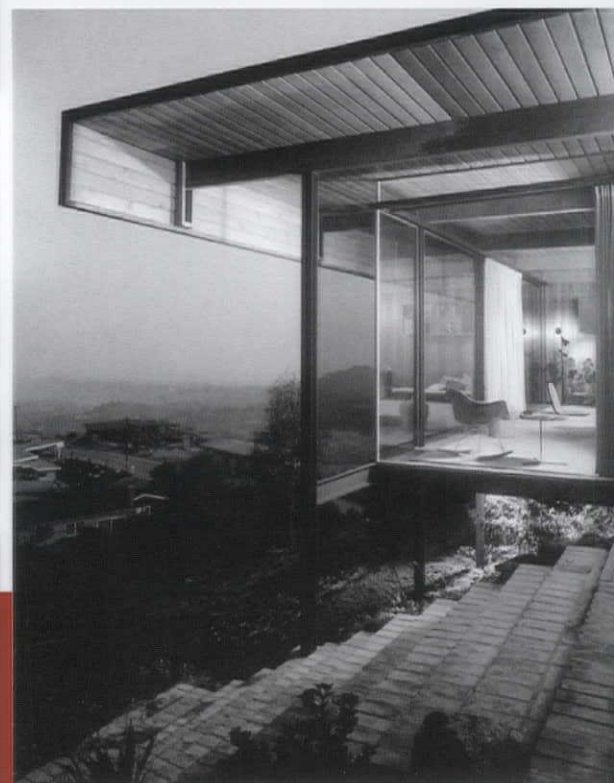
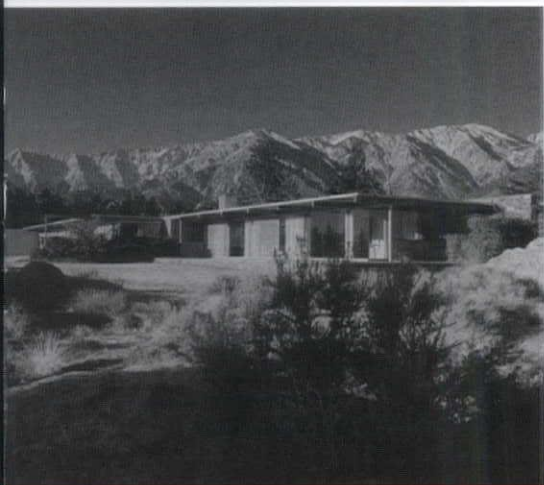
THE MAK CENTER SEEKS OUT AND SUPPORTS INNOVATIVE PROJECTS AND IDEAS. It acts as a "think tank" for current issues in art and architecture by encouraging exploration and experimentation of artistic practices. Activities include exhibitions, lectures, concerts, film screenings, performances, publication projects, and new work commissions.

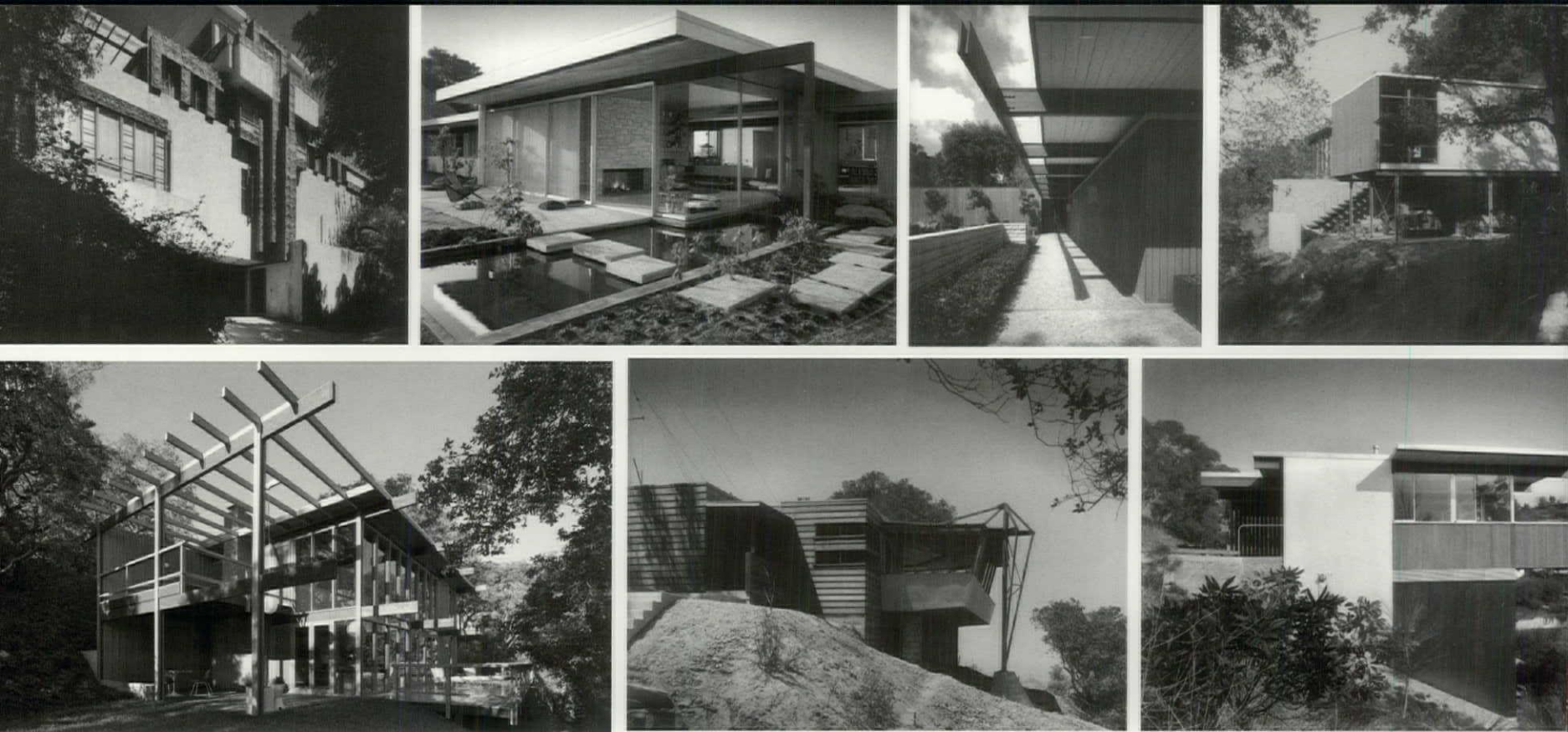


FITZPATRICK-LELAND HOUSE (R.M. Schindler, 1936)
The dramatic L-shaped Fitzpatrick-Leland House was originally commissioned by developer Clifton Fitzpatrick as a speculative home, to attract buyers to the new housing tracts at the top of Laurel Canyon.
© MAK Center / Photo by patricia parinejad

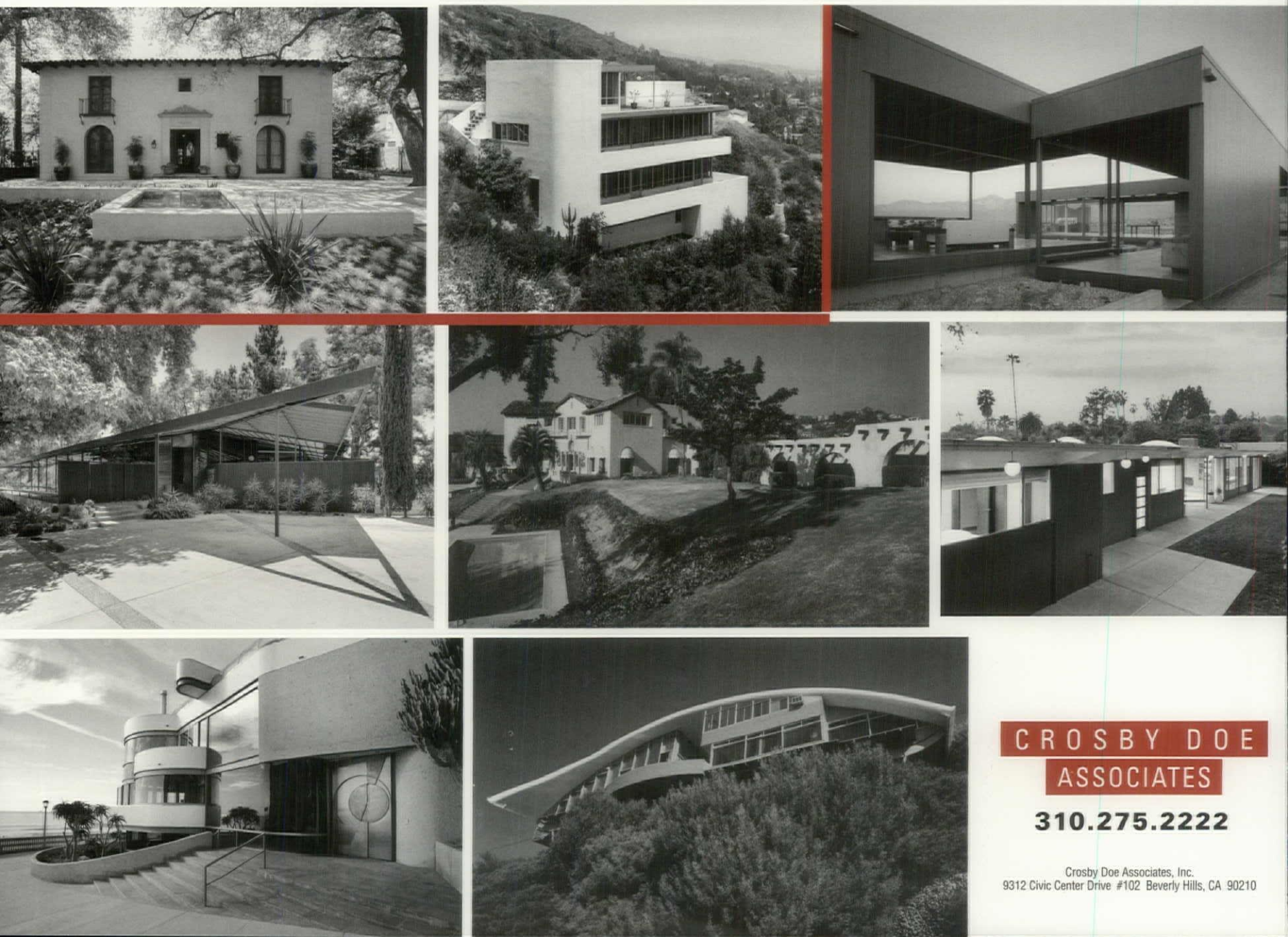


MACKEY APARTMENT BUILDING (R.M. Schindler, 1939)
The Mackey Apartments are home to the MAK Center's residency program designed for visiting artists, architects, and students of architecture.
© MAK Center / Photo by Joshua White





MAKING A MARKET FOR ARCHITECTURE SINCE 1974



**CROSBY DOE
ASSOCIATES**

310.275.2222

Crosby Doe Associates, Inc.
9312 Civic Center Drive #102 Beverly Hills, CA 90210