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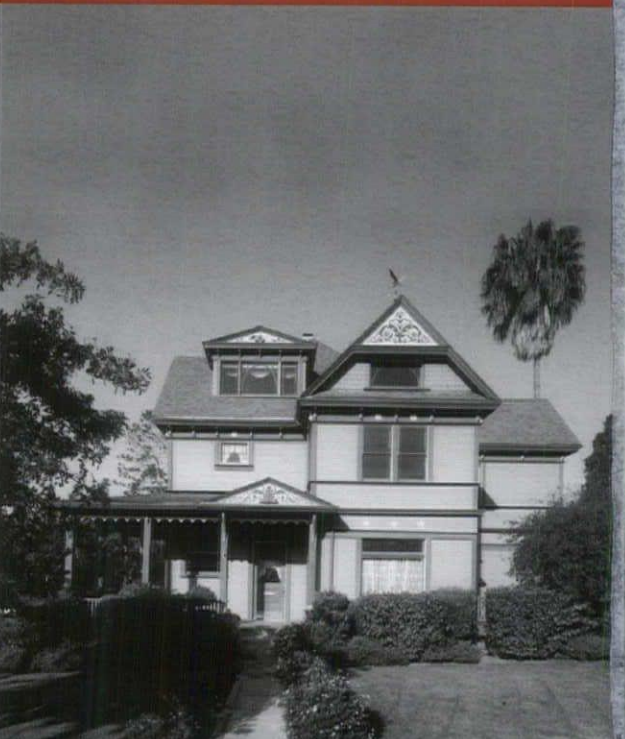
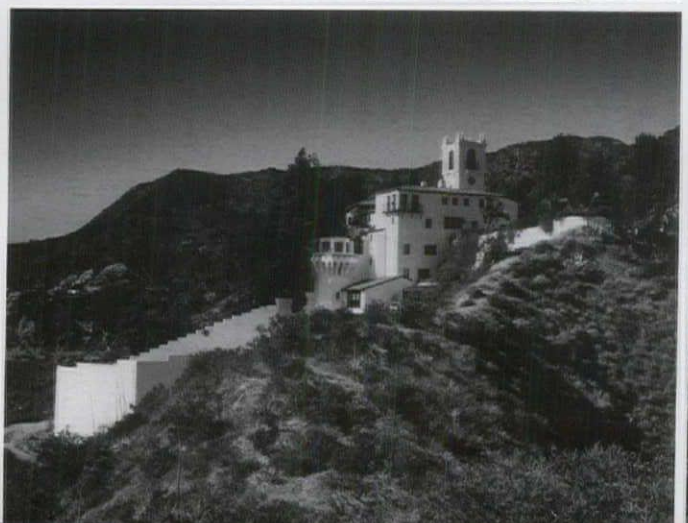
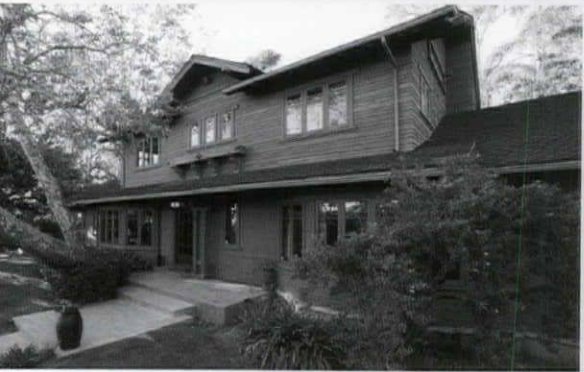
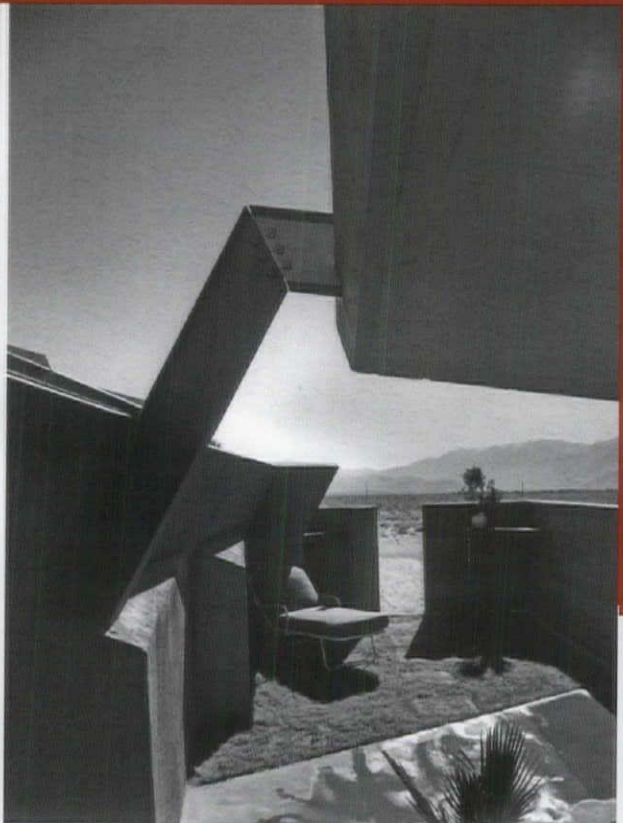
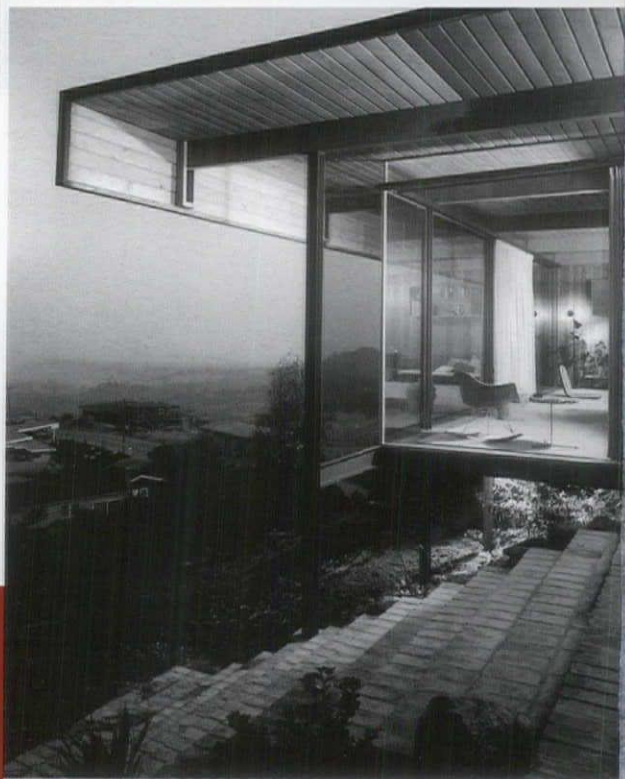
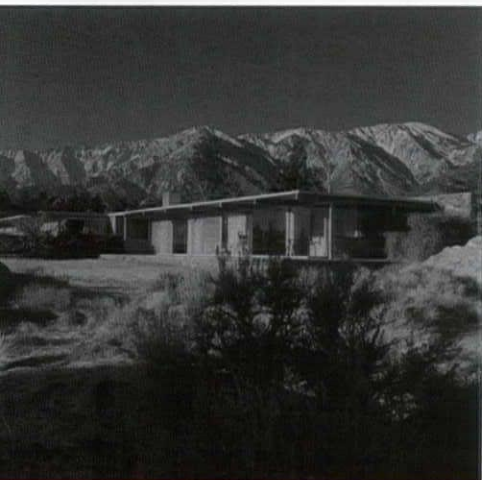
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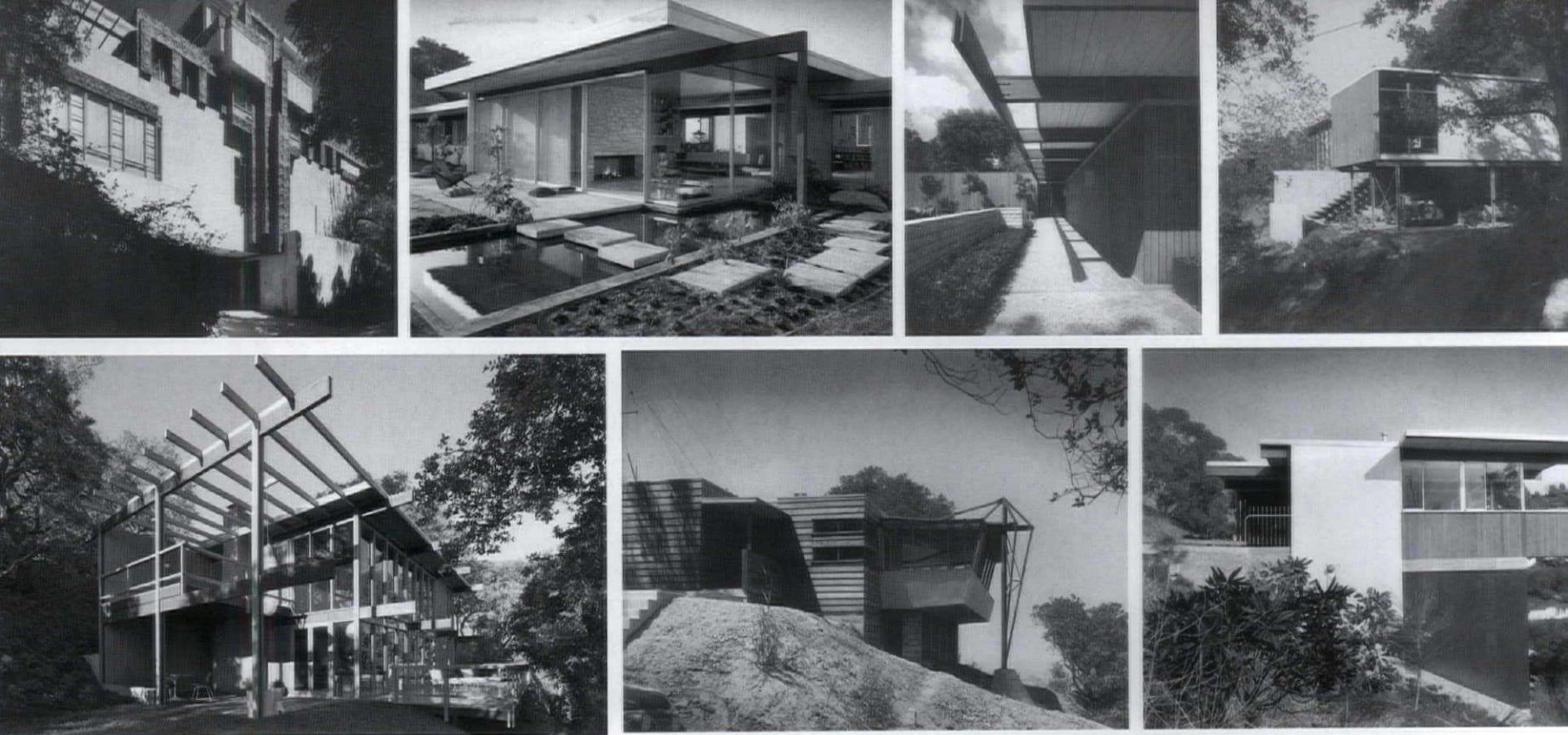


THE GREAT INDOORS

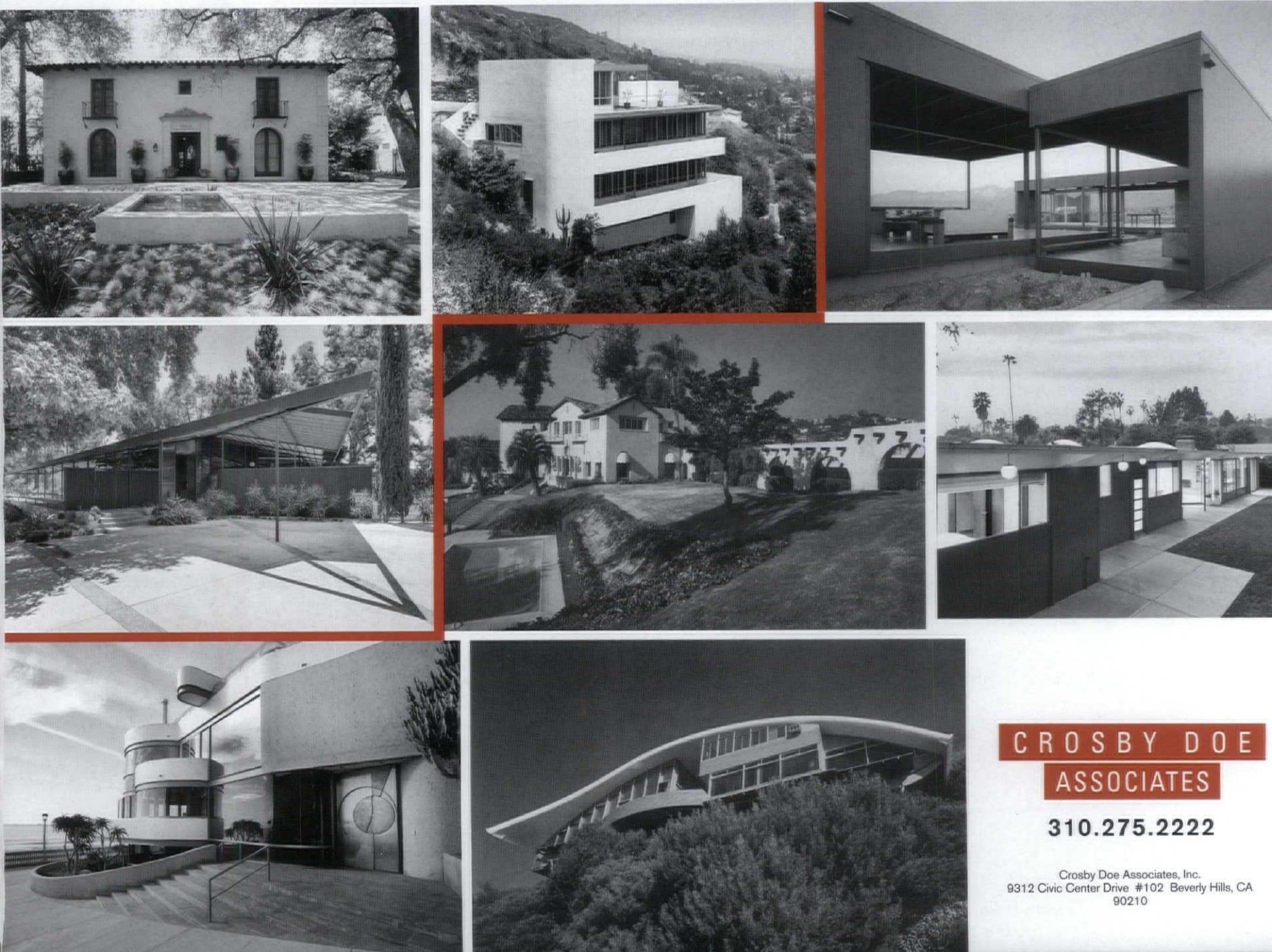
How Cliff May Shaped Modern Western Living

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MAKING A MARKET FOR ARCHITECTURE SINCE 1974



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FOR THE LOVE OF ARCHITECTURE

Okay, let me admit this up front: I am one of the lucky ones. Not only do I sell historic and architect-designed properties for a living—which I love and have been doing in Los Angeles for over 40 years—but for 35 of those years, I have been living with my wife in a two-story hilltop manse designed by architect Joseph Blick with spacious interiors that open to views of the surrounding cityscape. So I know firsthand the impact architecture can have on one's daily life.

That's all the more reason why I have always believed that the true value of architecture lies in the joy and excitement it generates, as well as the enhanced quality of life it provides by its very immersive nature—it's not just about the substantial profit you might be able to pocket by investing in it. So imagine my amusement when I ran across two recent articles on Realtor.com (operated by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp) that attempt to quantify the dollar value that good architecture and historic properties command in the marketplace.

To my knowledge, this was the first time that any major organization connected with the real-estate industry has undertaken such an effort. So I applaud their attempt. Yet, the results of their statistical analysis (conducted by data journalist Yuqing Pan) confirmed what I already knew. According to Pan's research, residential properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places sell for 5.6% more than similar-size properties in the same zip code and noted 20th-century architects such as Philip Johnson, Richard Neutra, and Marcel Breuer command premiums from 32% to 149%.

While I commend News Corp's interest and effort and acknowledge that the research did get some key things right—e.g., historic and architect-designed residential properties sell for more than houses of similar size and square footage in the same area—the published results present a misleading picture of the premiums our historic heritage can realize in the marketplace. In one instance, Pan's article states, "[Frank Lloyd] Wright's work is not the most expensive. In fact, it's very far from it!" The article attributes only a 52% premium to Wright's work; yet I can tell you that over the years, Wright's 1923 Storer House in the Hollywood Hills, which has sold three times since the early 1980s, has garnered a premium of nearly 200% each time—even before it was restored by film producer and architecture aficionado Joel Silver. Thus, the Storer House commands a premium far above the highest average increase recorded for any architect in the survey.

Likewise, John Lautner's work was shown to sell at a premium of 108%, yet one of his works likely used in the survey was his 1947 Carling House, which was most recently sold in 2014. Records for that year indicate that the average house in the area sold for about \$620 per foot. Meanwhile, the Carling House sold for \$1,624 per foot, a 162% premium. And another notable Lautner that hit the market that same year had to be completely restored, including the demolition of an unfortunate addition that did not help the value of the house. Variables like these are not reflected in Pan's article.

Of course, I could be accused of cherry-picking—which I admit I am. But the point remains the same: It is dangerous to attempt to quantify the value of architecture in terms of averages without qualification. The economic value of each work of architecture must be evaluated on its own merits, with due consideration to location, integrity, and the significance of the property within the architect's body of work. After all, what price could we possibly put on Wright's priceless masterpiece, Fallingwater?

Despite the dangers of misleading the public inherent in Pan's work, I am happy that anyone in the media made an attempt to address the value of architecture at all. But I can definitely tell you this much: Each day I come home and count my blessings, knowing that I am privileged to live in a magical environment—rather than imagining what my property might be worth.

Cosby Doe

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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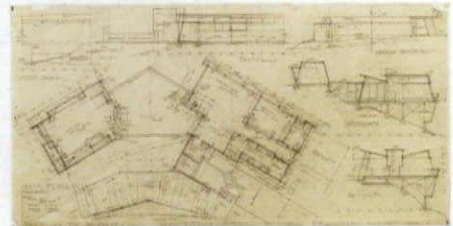
CONTRIBUTORS

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THE ART OF MASTERING THE SLOPE

By Nicholas Olsberg

Never one to run from a creative challenge, Rudolph Schindler proved he could conquer hill-side terrain with his innovative Kallis House in suburban Los Angeles.



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OUT WITH THE NEW

By Alison Singh Gee

Breaking with tradition, Asian buyers are discovering the value of owning vintage architect-designed properties.



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WEST WORLD

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With this 1968 Bell Canyon model home and its master-planned recreational surroundings, Cliff May took the suburban ranch to the next level—and further defined Western living.



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MAN OF THE CENTURY

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At the ripe age of 100, structural engineer Richard Bradshaw steps out from behind the scenes to celebrate his unparalleled architectural legacy.



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PLETSCH IN PASADENA

By Barbara Lamprecht

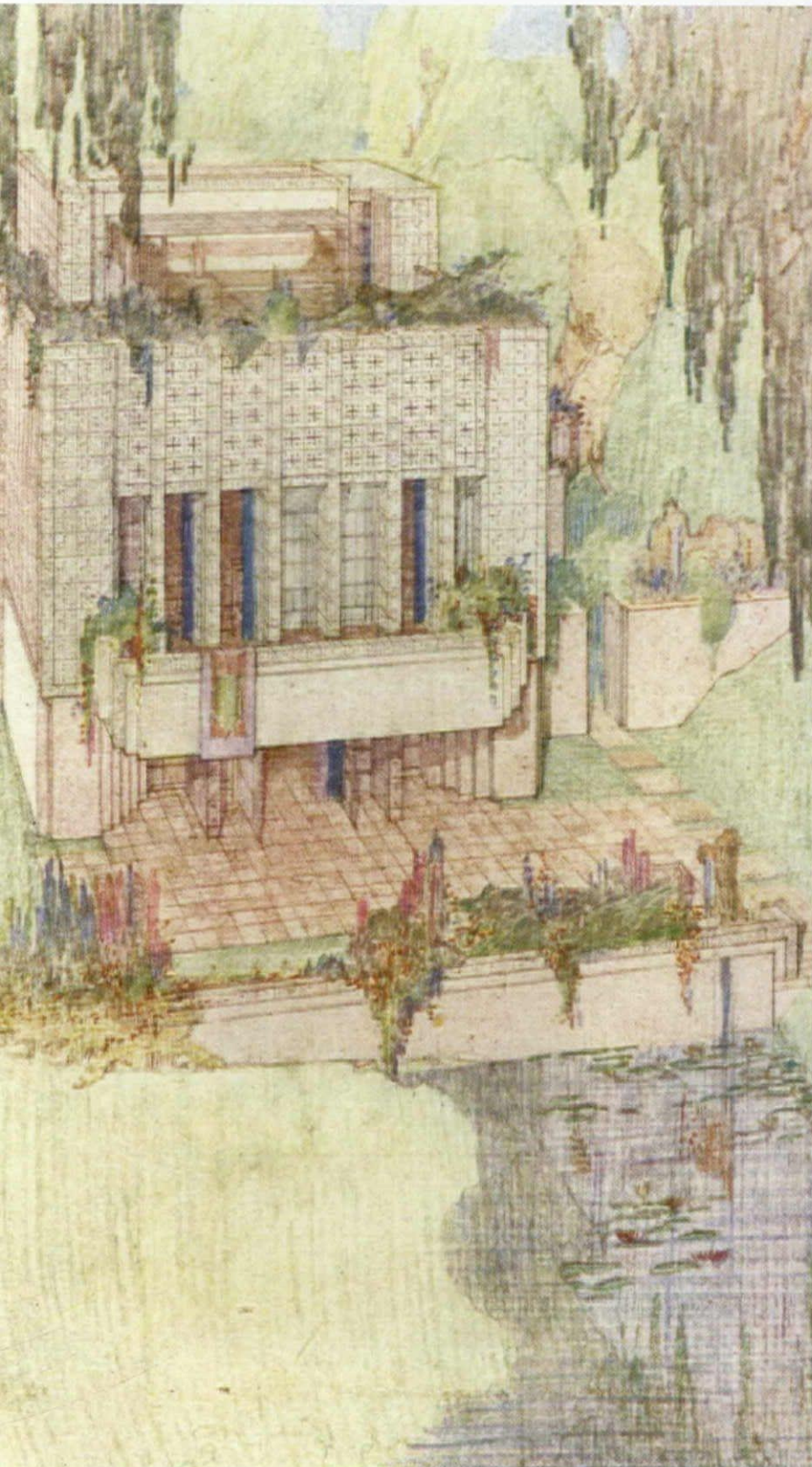
The most prolific Southern California architect you've never heard of, Theodore Pletsch mixed Beaux Arts with modernism, bringing a new interpretation of elegance to the City of Roses.



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ON THE MARKET

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



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



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Pierluigi Serraino, AIA, is an architect, author, and educator. Prior to entering his independent practice, he has worked for Mark Mack, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, and Anshen + Allen. He has lectured extensively on post-war American architecture, California modernism, architectural photography, changes in architectural practice and digital design. His work and writings have been widely published and he has authored four books, among them *Donald Olsen: Architect of Habitable Abstractions* (Stout Publishers, Fall 2013), *Modernism Rediscovered with Julius Shulman* (Taschen, 2000), and *Nor-CalMod: Icons of Northern California Modernism* (Chronicle Books, 2006), as well as numerous essays. Pierluigi is recipient of the 2013 Graham Foundation grant for his upcoming book on architectural photographer Robert Damora.



ALISON SINGH GEE

Alison Singh Gee is an award-winning journalist and author who has written about design and architecture for such publications as *Elle Decoration* and *Vogue Living*. Most recently, she chronicled the secret life of her husband's ramshackle 100-room Indian palace in her comic memoir, *Where the Peacocks Sing: A Palace, a Prince and the Search for Home*.



Photo: Larsen & Talbert

BARBARA LAMPRECHT

A qualified architectural historian specializing in the rehabilitation of modern buildings, Barbara Lamprecht is the author of *Neutra: Complete Works* (Taschen, 2000), *Neutra* (Taschen 2016), and *Richard Neutra: Furniture: The Body and the Senses* (Wasmuth, 2015). She has taught architectural history and lectured at numerous institutions, including the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Getty Conservation Institute. Lamprecht earned an M. Arch. at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and a doctorate at the University of Liverpool. She has also contributed a chapter for *William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism* (2015) and a chapter for the upcoming book, *2017*, about the work of contemporary L.A. architecture firm Escher GuneWardena. Currently, Lamprecht is working on the rehabilitation of the landmark Jardinette Apartments in Hollywood which Neutra designed in 1928 (with Rudolph Schindler).



ANDREA HUNTER DIETZ

Andrea Hunter Dietz is a Los Angeles-based architect, designer, and educator. She is interested in alternative and responsive platforms for both learning about and practicing architecture. She has a background in participatory and public interest design (with Design Corps) and in relational aesthetics and event production (with estudio teddy cruz). She is a longtime associate of Woodbury School of Architecture where she coordinated a multi-million dollar federal grant, led graduate program curriculum development, oversaw digital fabrication facility improvements and operations and delivered coursework in research methodologies and theory. She presently teaches at Cal Poly Pomona and freelances as a creative consultant.



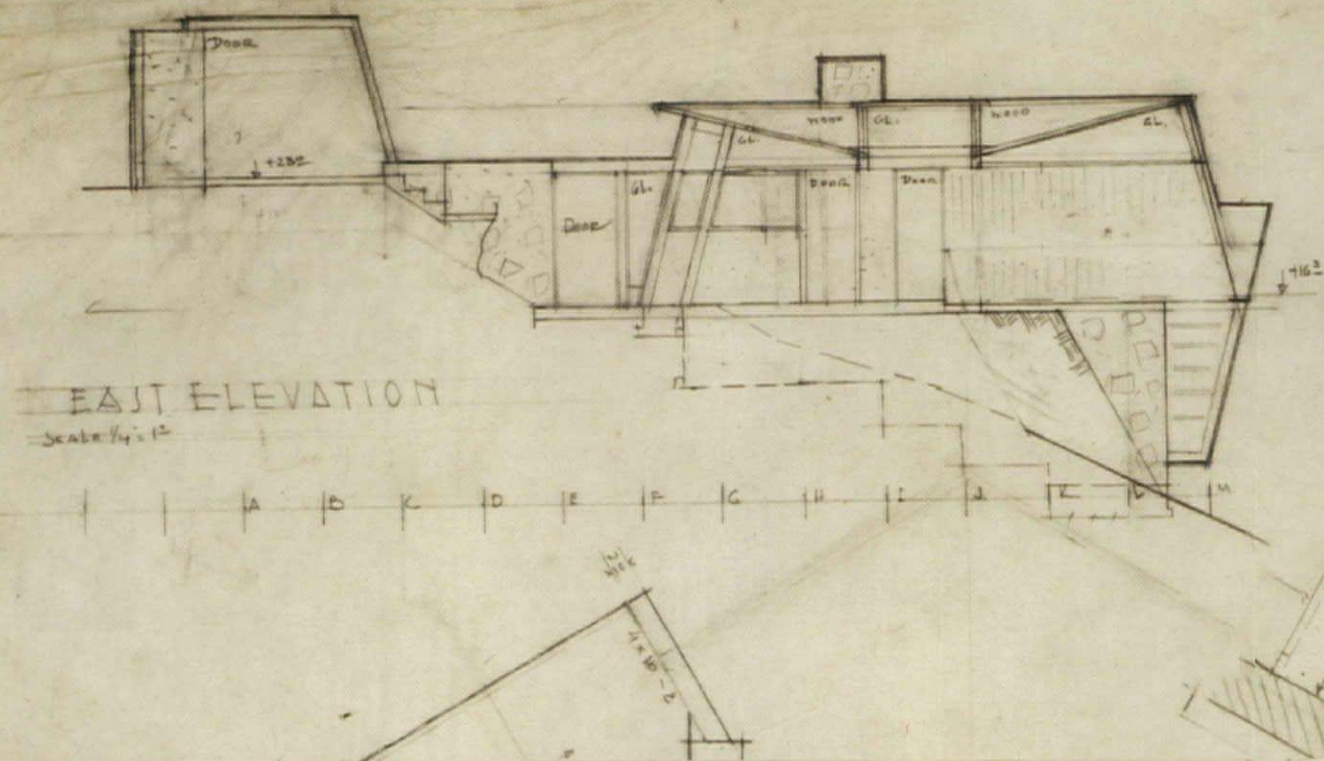
CAMERON CAROTHERS

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



The Art of MASTERING the SLOPE

NEVER ONE TO RUN FROM A CREATIVE CHALLENGE,
RUDOLPH SCHINDLER PROVED HE COULD
CONQUER HILLSIDE TERRAIN WITH HIS INNOVATIVE
KALLIS HOUSE IN SUBURBAN LOS ANGELES.



EAST ELEVATION

Scale 1/4" = 1'

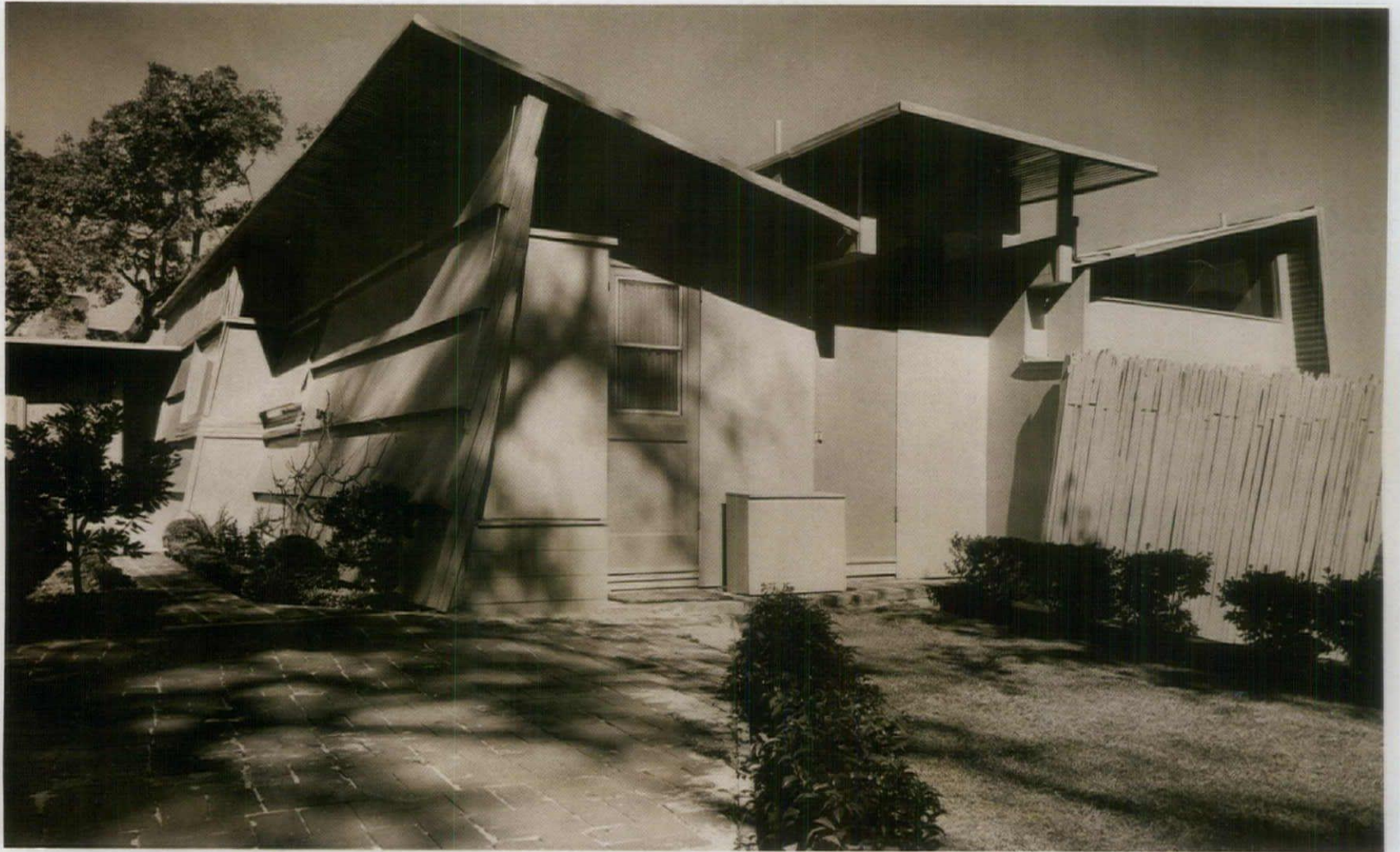
for MR. ALBERT L. KALLIS 20 OAKLAND DRIVE



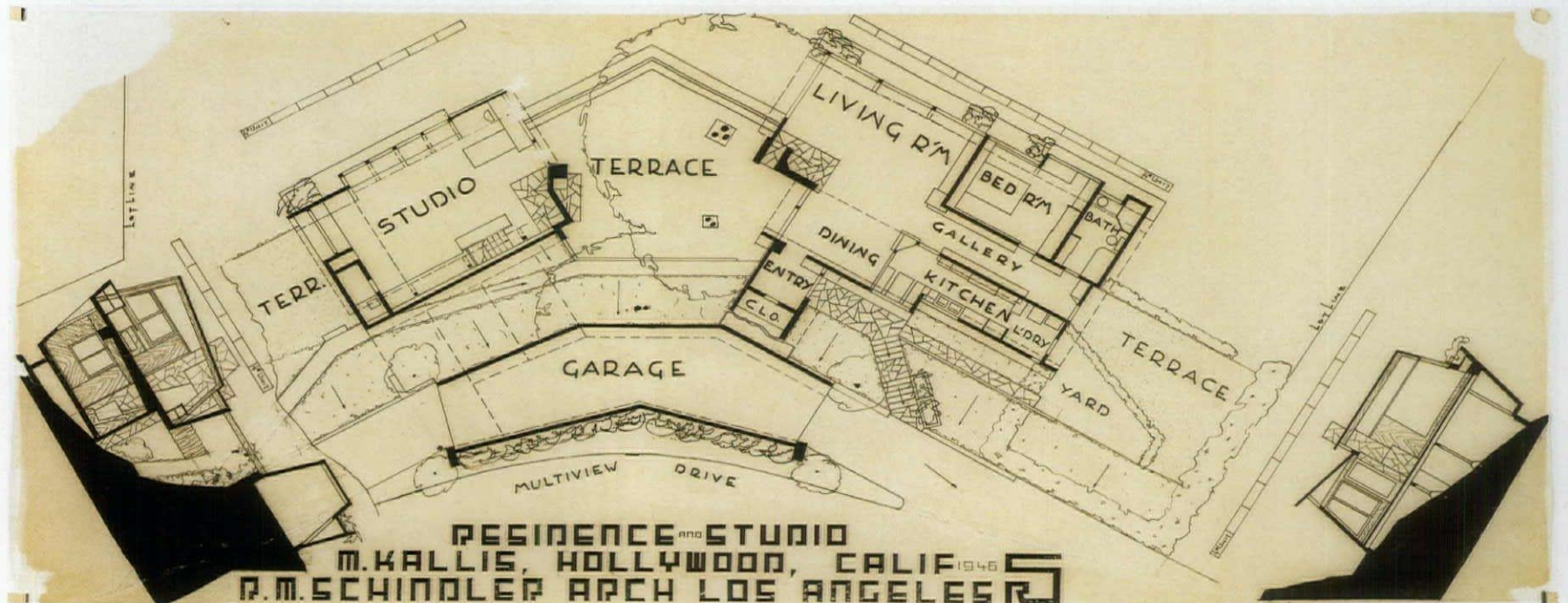


Written by **Nicholas Olsberg**

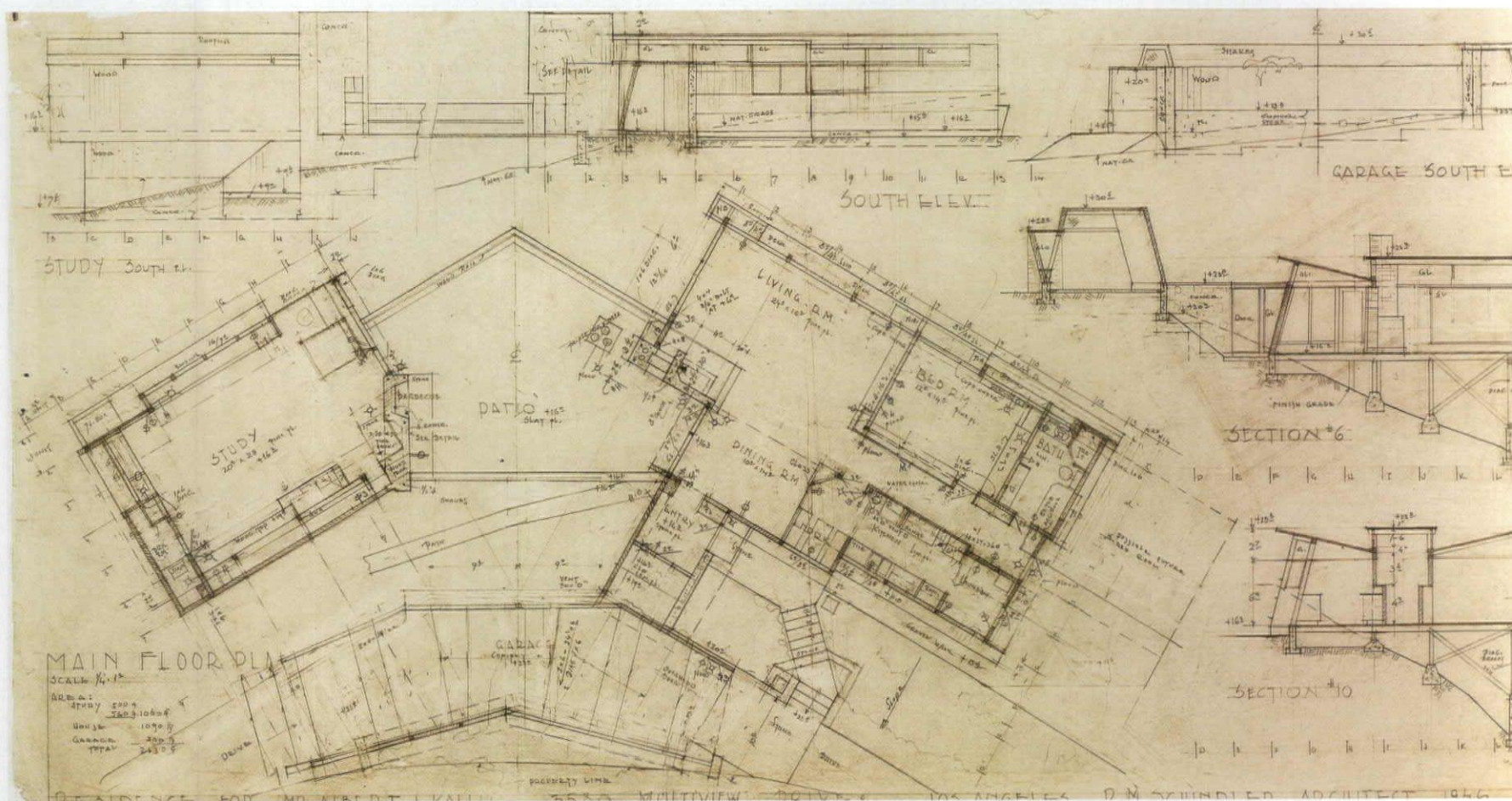
Photographs by **Cameron Carothers**



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As our perspective on mid-20th-century Los Angeles grows with the passage of time, we are quicker to recognize that its experiments in modern living were as vast as they were varied and the work of its master builders was uncommonly distinctive. Certain fundamentals characterized the California modern house and many were adopted world-wide: the open plan; the ease of movement between inside and out; the division of the garden into zones for outdoor living; the increase of living space within a small structure by eliminating many traditional features, such as basements, hallways, and attics. But the leading figures in the first 15 years of postwar California architecture—Richard Neutra, Charles and Ray Eames, John Lautner, among others—were not only united by an adherence to this common language, but by the different and often highly original ways in which they spoke it, from the simple tongue of Raphael Soriano to the high drama of Lloyd Wright.

At the time, there were particular conditions in Southern California that encouraged this supply of seemingly inexhaustible originality and invention. As the post-war development and suburban sprawl of Los Angeles spread to steeper and more intractable sites, architects faced engineering challenges and planning opportunities for which few rules or conventions existed. Highly irregular sloping lots presented extraordinary challenges for which architects sought solutions: Maximizing vistas by inverting the usual sequence of entry, living, and sleeping spaces; reimagining house plans to suit the slope, either by condensing them in order to float the structure on a raised platform (e.g., John Lautner's spaceship-style Chemosphere house in the Hollywood Hills) or by creating dwelling zones that follow the lay of the land—as Rudolph Schindler chose to do in 1946 with his innovative Kallis House in suburban Studio City, California.

Such invention depended as much on adventurous clients as on imaginative

architects and this was another advantage of the L.A. landscape that contributed to the rethinking of spatial and visual patterns in the modern home. There were the engineers of the burgeoning aerospace industry, the designers and artists who toiled at the movie studios in what was arguably their heyday and the presence of a Bohemian sub-culture open to new and more casual ways of living. All these factors were enough to produce a small but significant pool of clients as ready to live in an experimental structure as the architect was to design one. As Lautner once noted, it was his clients' openness to new ways of living that compelled him to stay in L.A.: *He simply could not have done what he did anywhere else.*

Architects faced engineering challenges and planning opportunities for which there were few rules or conventions.



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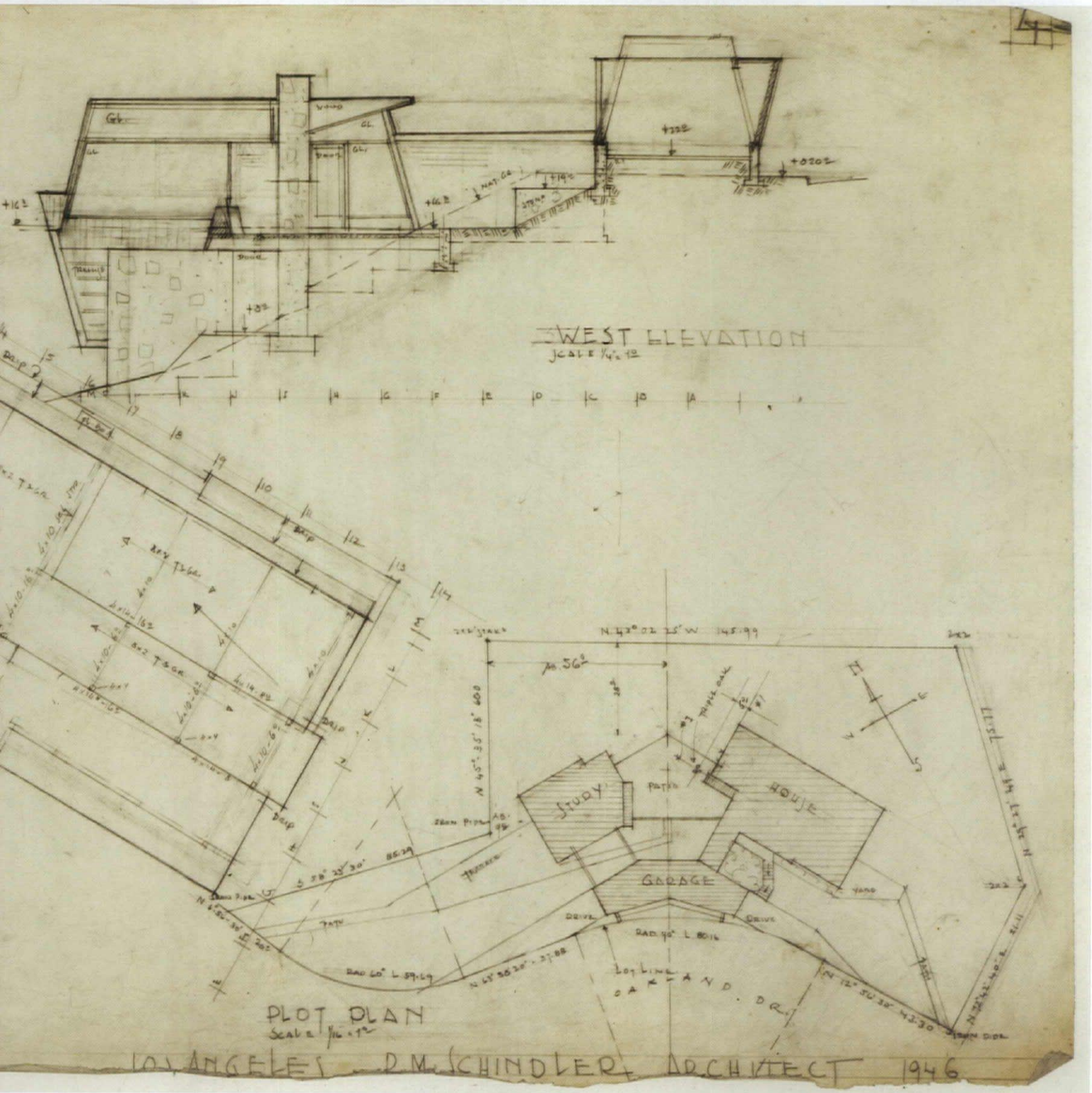


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The same could be said of Rudolph Schindler and the Kallis House. In many ways, the Austrian-born architect was the most brilliant and consistently inventive of L.A.'s modern masters, not to mention he was the eldest and most practiced among them. In a famous phrase, the distinguished English architectural critic Reyner Banham described Schindler as designing houses "as if there had never been houses before." No two were quite the same and none looked like anything anyone had seen or lived in before. Among them, the house and studio he designed for the artist and Hollywood art director Mischa Kallis, built in the first year of peacetime California, is perhaps the most strikingly original of all—it is set high on a slope, twisted and divided into segments to meet the curve of the road and the shape of the lot. It not only reinvented the relationship of indoors and out, upstairs and down, but it was constructed with incredible complexity through the simplest of building methods.

Born in 1887, Schindler had studied and apprenticed in Vienna and was profoundly affected by the emerging theories of Adolf Loos, Josef Frank, and

others, who were proposing a new stripped-down simplicity to the texture and scale of the home, while advancing new ways of thinking about the house and its rooms—what Frank called a journey of constant discovery within the smallest of shapes. Schindler arrived in Chicago shortly before the outbreak of World War I and soon found himself working for Frank Lloyd Wright, eventually taking over the office during Wright's absences. Little noted, but central to the rest of his career, was his extensive work on what remained the largest single project in all of Wright's work—the "ready-built" American System Homes, in which dwellings of every scale and context, many of great complexity, were constructed from the same pre-cut repertory of components in a system of frames and panels. He shared with Wright, too, an almost missionary belief in architecture and especially the reform of the home as a social, moral, and cultural force rather than a mere matter of convenience and design. Wright talked of making the home "a place for the growth of the soul," and Schindler of "the building as a frame... a cultural agent—stimulating and fulfilling the urge for growth and extension of our own selves."





*H*ouses must avoid any *“stereotyped vocabulary of steel columns, horizontal parapets and corner windows.”*

It was their mutual opinion that houses, as in the American System, must be made simply, economically and with readily available building materials and construction techniques. It is that balance between poetry and practicality, complex spatial journeys made through simple constructional means, that Schindler set out to achieve from the start of his independent career, with his own dual concrete-and-glass house at 835 North Kings Road in West Hollywood—now an L.A. landmark. Through the 1930s, he continued to explore this in many small-house experiments with panel systems, culminating in two series of “Schindler Shelters,” designed for prefabrication in different materials and at different scales.

By 1946, Schindler had moved firmly in another direction in which the house is not delivered as a kit, or designed from standard pre-cut panels, but developed on and for its site. Rather than a system or a single mathematical module, he produced unique solutions, using standard board dimensions and familiar joinery techniques to ensure their rapid and efficient construction. Furthermore, he used

plain boards to avoid the cost of plaster and often created cladding—as he did with the Kallis House—using rough-and-ready materials from builders’ yards, sourcing commonplace materials at garden and hardware stores and adjusting the design as the framework, space and light unfolded before him. Noted architectural historian Esther McCoy, who worked with Schindler at the time, recalled that this mode of working was a source of endless delight for him as he sketched a plan that had never been seen before on to a site map, or laid a board at an immeasurable angle to form a wall.

To explain the thinking behind such works as the Kallis house, Schindler defined a number of general principles. Houses must avoid any “stereotyped vocabulary of steel columns, horizontal parapets, and corner windows.” Those produced something “essentially one-dimensional, whereas the house as an organism in direct relation with our lives must be of four dimensions” in which “every detail, including the furniture, is related to the whole and to the idea which is its source.”

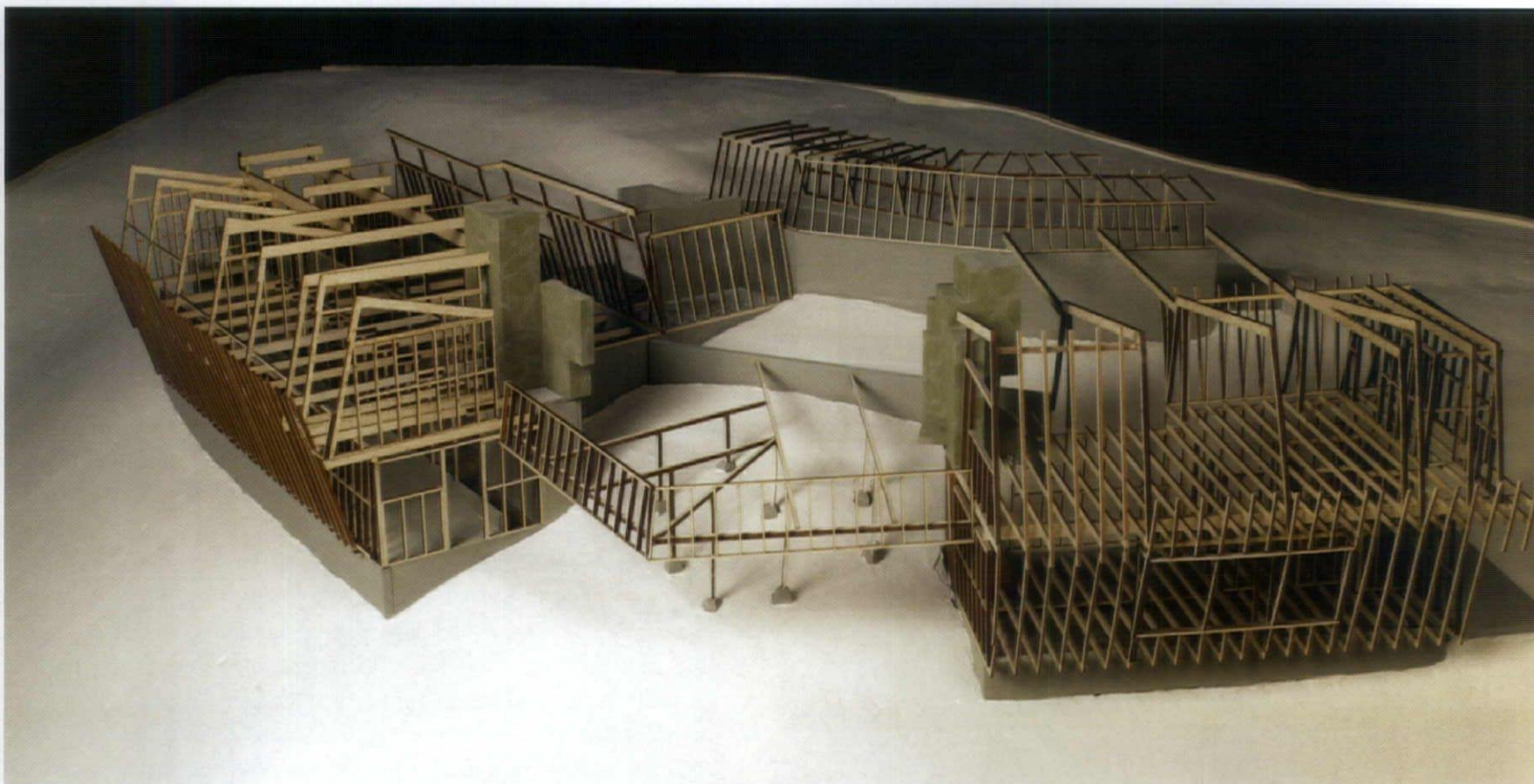




He went on to say how each element should be treated. The floor "is understood to be part and continuation of the ground outside" and should be carried through in hard finishes to achieve that. Furnishings must "merge...with the house, leaving the room free to express its form." Doors are there "to walk through rather than to form an impressive frame for one who carefully pauses on the threshold." Roofs, increasingly important to Schindler, are to "shelter us instead of crowning our position," and the meeting of wall and ceiling should create the essential flow of light between spaces, drawing the eye to the roof above and producing "a natural interlacing of the areas

of communication" that are sheltered under it. Windows "must minimize window-heads to maximize continuity." Light should "permeate space, give it body, and make it as palpably plastic as is the clay of a sculptor." Structure must be made plain, no beams hidden, and the logic of the construction evident. In this way, the whole will have a rhythm that is not artificially set up by the repetition of a fixed unit of measure, "which creates texture rather than rhythm" but by "related spacings," so that the house will become like a piece of music, its tempo and phrases interlocking into a single coherent "space-frame" with a logic that is unique to it.

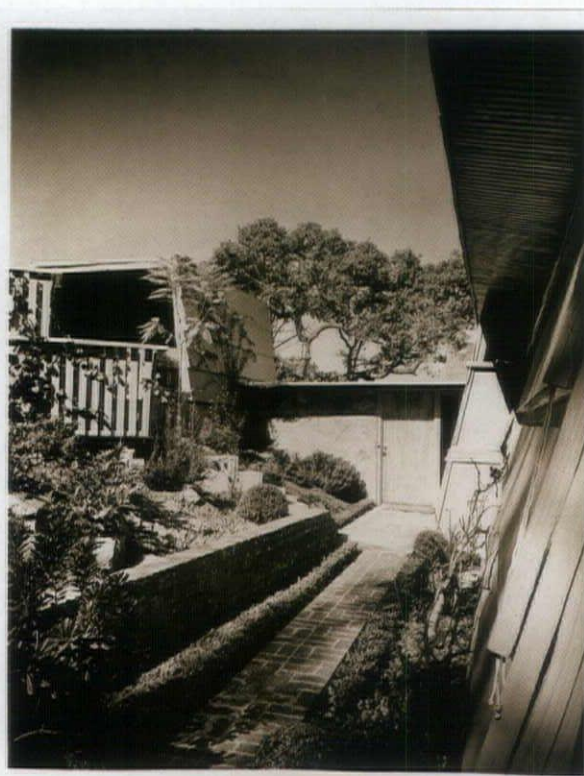
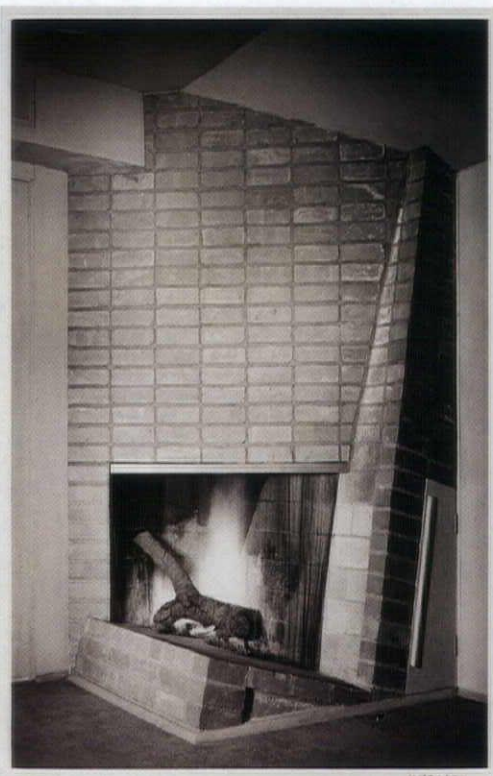




A model of the Mischa Kallis house, designed by R.M. Schindler, at "Technology and Environment: The Postwar House in Southern California."
Photograph copyright Timothy Sakamoto

These are complicated notions and they may produce work with extraordinary underlying complexity. They are dependent, as he said, not on models or perspective drawings, which he rarely produced, but on what was "visualized and created in his mind." For the Kallis House, Schindler drew 17 different sections on one sheet just to begin to express the shapes of the spaces and to demonstrate what united them—in this case a series of two-foot intervals, like the staves of a musical score, which he drew beneath each section and which is reflected in all dimensions

as he averaged his ceiling heights to eight feet and varied each component on the same division of 12. The framing and supporting system (which can be seen in the marvelous model of the Kallis House built by students at Cal Poly Pomona for the Pacific Standard Time art exhibition held in 2011) is even more complex. Yet the result—with its sloping walls, changing heights, mingling of rough to smooth, interlocking space, and interlacing light—has a sense of improvisation and feels extraordinarily simple, light, and alive, like a sculpture made of empty space.



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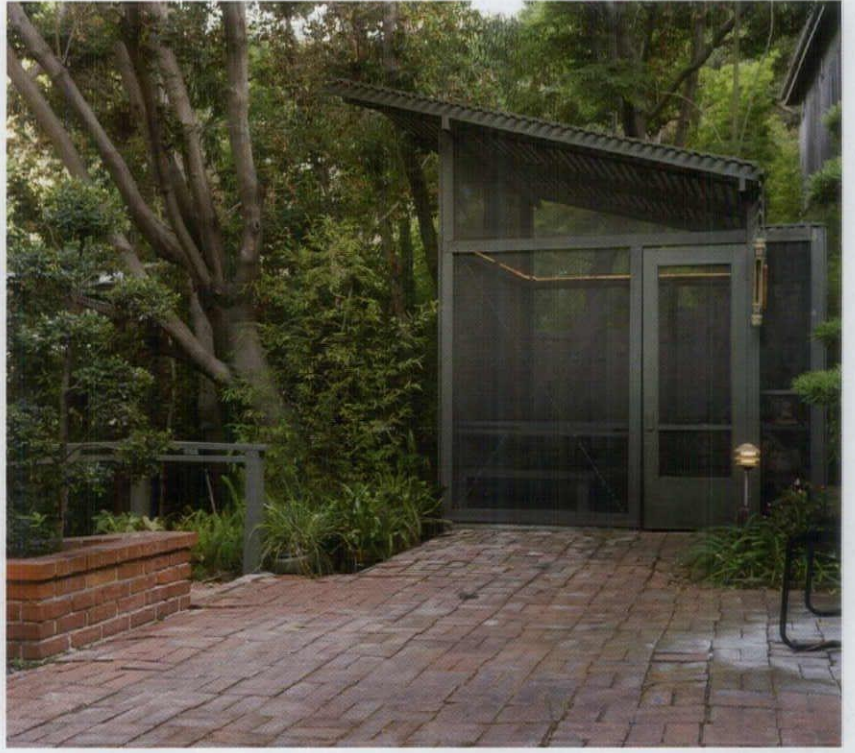
"He designs and builds in space forms rather than mass forms," McCoy wrote in 1945 as Schindler produced sketches of the Kallis house, according to Susan Morgan's book, *Piecing Together Los Angeles: An Esther McCoy Reader*. "His houses are wrapped around space. A Schindler house is in movement; it is becoming. Form emerges from form. It is like a bird that has just touched earth, its wings still spread."

The Kallis House, perhaps more than any other of his masterworks, carries that joyous sense of becoming. To use the kind of musical analogy he favored, it seemed to welcome that first year of world peace and to celebrate the life of the family who would reside in it as a kind of *scherzo*—a fast-moving composition performed in a playful manner. It is an increasingly famous work that students of architecture throughout the world study and learn from and has been referred to as "an exploded box with slanted walls and angled roofs and trapezoidal windows." With its raw, unfinished quality, it was an enormous influence on Frank Gehry, who studied it at USC in the 1950s.

Over time, the home has stayed essentially within two branches of the same family—the Kallises, who were devoted to visual arts and the Sharlins, who were dedicated to music. Clearly, it has been much respected and loved. For many years, it survived unchanged. Even with the eventual enclosing of the patio by the talented modernist Josef van der Kar and the quiet conversion of the studio to the master bedroom by Leroy Miller, Schindler's original concept has remained firmly in place. Most of his cabinetry is still there and the furnishings reflect his preference for muted colors and are carefully positioned to harmonize with the architecture. As a result, if there were ever one house that best expressed Schindler's optimistic vision of an architecture that was the agent of a free and creative life and a demonstration that such a thing could indeed exist, this casual, playful and wonderfully livable masterpiece just might be it. **ais**









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By

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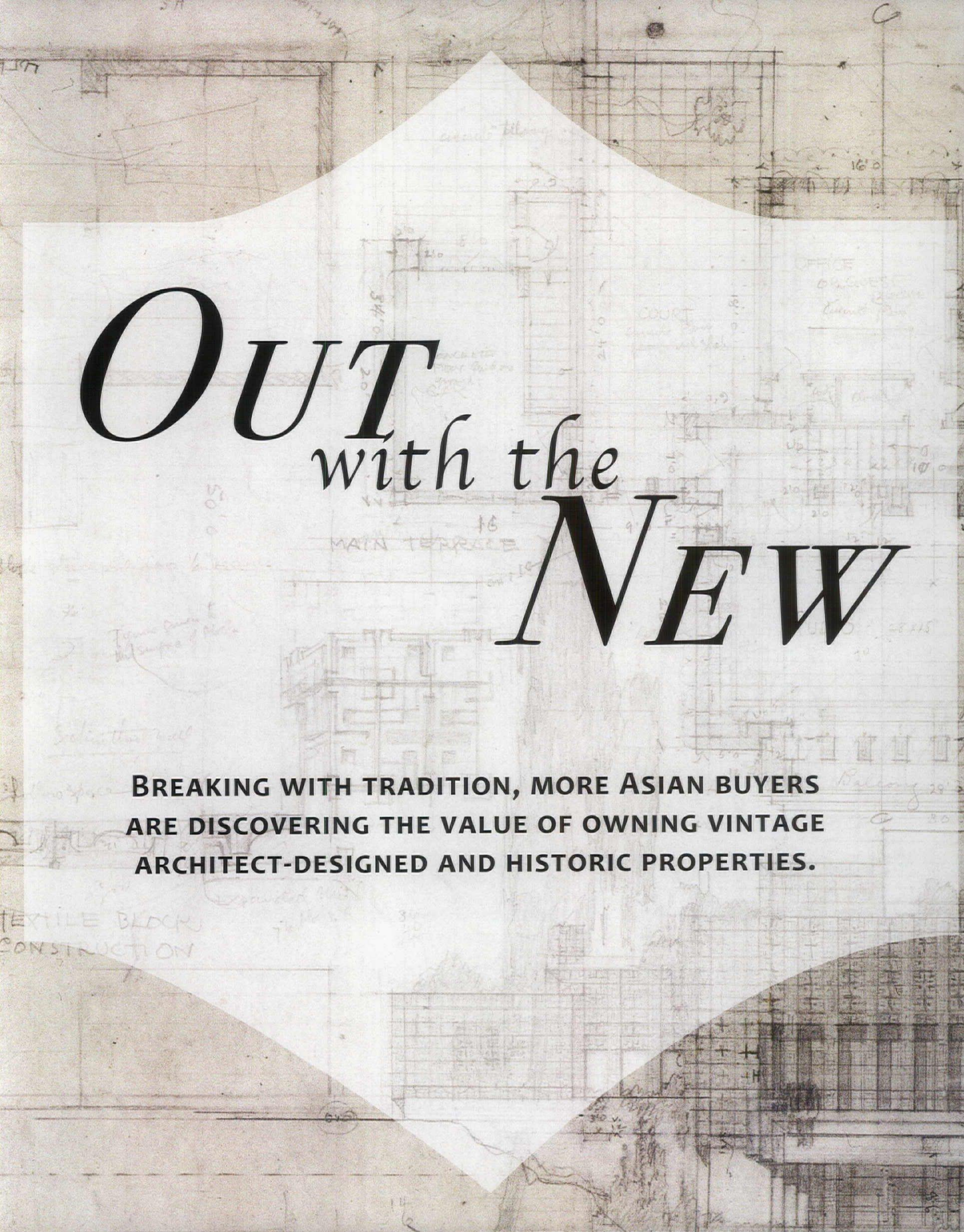
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The background is a detailed architectural drawing, likely a floor plan or site plan, rendered in a light brown or sepia tone. It features a grid system, various lines representing walls, doors, and furniture, and handwritten notes in a cursive script. A large, white, irregularly shaped paper overlay is placed over the drawing, with its top edge forming a pointed arch. The text 'OUT with the NEW' is printed on this white overlay. 'OUT' and 'NEW' are in a large, bold, black serif font, while 'with the' is in a smaller, black, cursive script font.

OUT with the *NEW*

**BREAKING WITH TRADITION, MORE ASIAN BUYERS
ARE DISCOVERING THE VALUE OF OWNING VINTAGE
ARCHITECT-DESIGNED AND HISTORIC PROPERTIES.**



Photo: Cameron Carothers

Jennifer Li and David You at La Miniatura

Written by **Alison Singh Gee**



Millard House Illustration copyright Kurt Wahlner

“How many Chinese have ever bought a house by Frank Lloyd Wright?”

David You was scrolling through the online pages of *The Wall Street Journal* in 2015 when something called to him. A native of Jiangsu Province, China, he had stumbled upon a story about the Millard House, a.k.a. La Miniatura, Frank Lloyd Wright's 1923 textile-block masterpiece in Pasadena. This iconic residence (once nominated for listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site) was on the market again. And though showing significant signs of age, it was still a stunner. With a price tag of \$3.95 million, La Miniatura might have been a pricey fixer upper. But for You, trained at one of the best architecture universities in China, this was not an insurmountable obstacle.

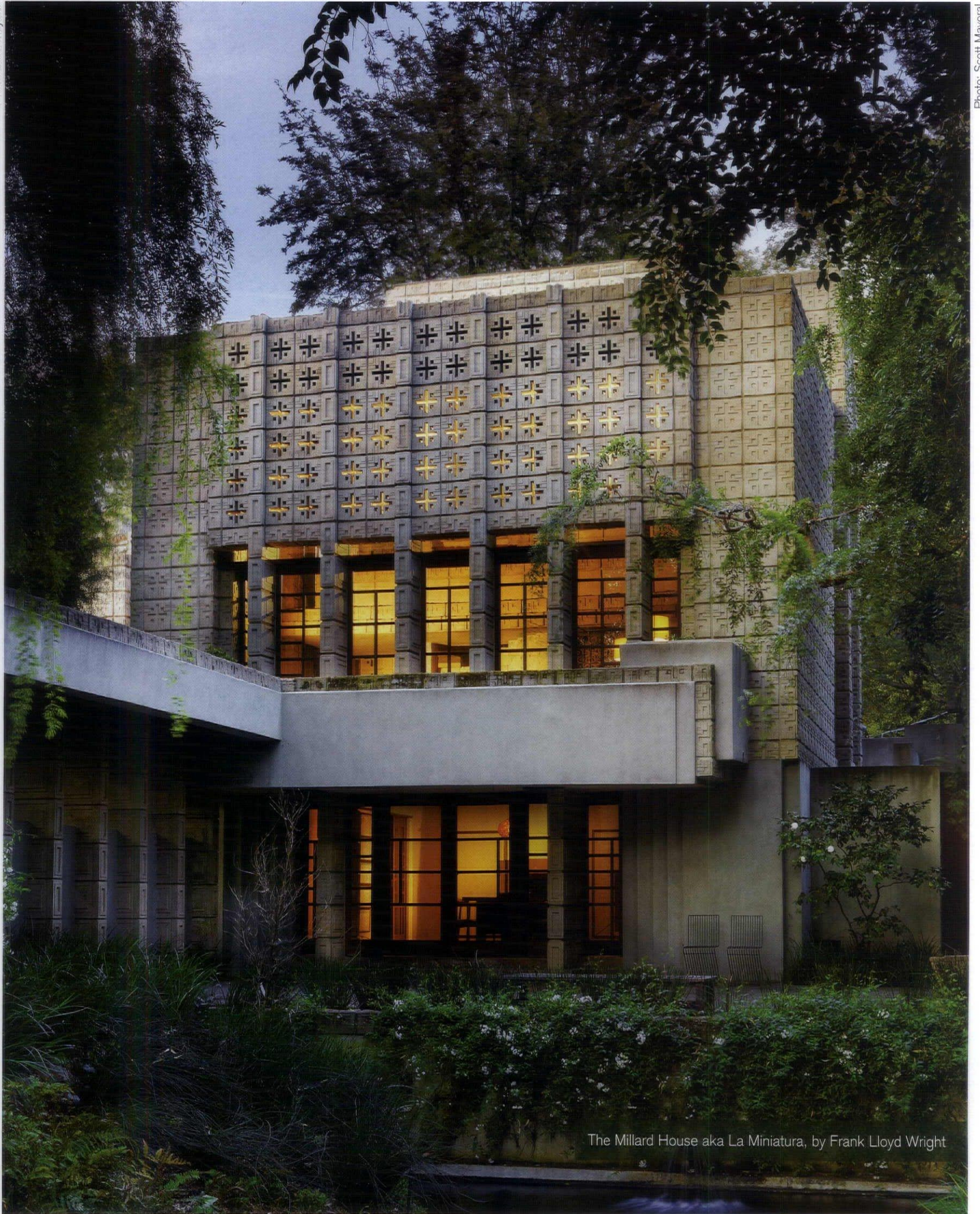
He and wife Jennifer Li, an engineer, already had a foothold in Southern California real estate—they had recently bought a gracious four-bedroom house with a pool in San Marino, California. And he was splitting time between this upscale enclave and a luxury apartment in Shanghai, where he runs a successful real-estate development company. Meanwhile, Li was living stateside with their two children, who were enrolled in San Marino's top-rated schools.

And yet, there was something about the landmark property in Pasadena he could not let go of. So he called Shanghai-born realtor Thomas Chan and arranged to tour the property. What he saw made his heart leap. Soft light filtered in through large windows overlooking a rocky garden and private pond. The untended grounds echoed possibilities. “We knew instantly that this was a

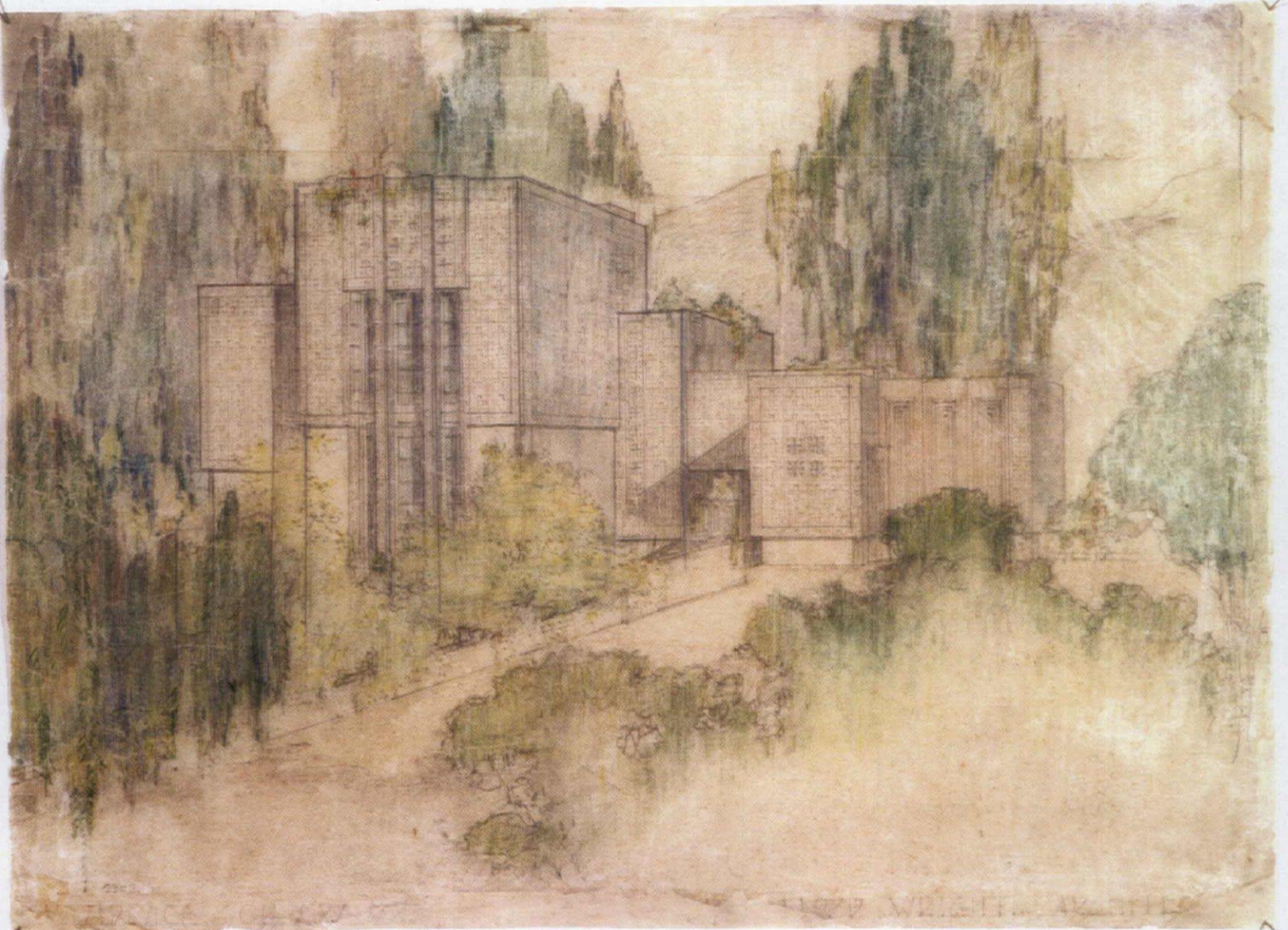
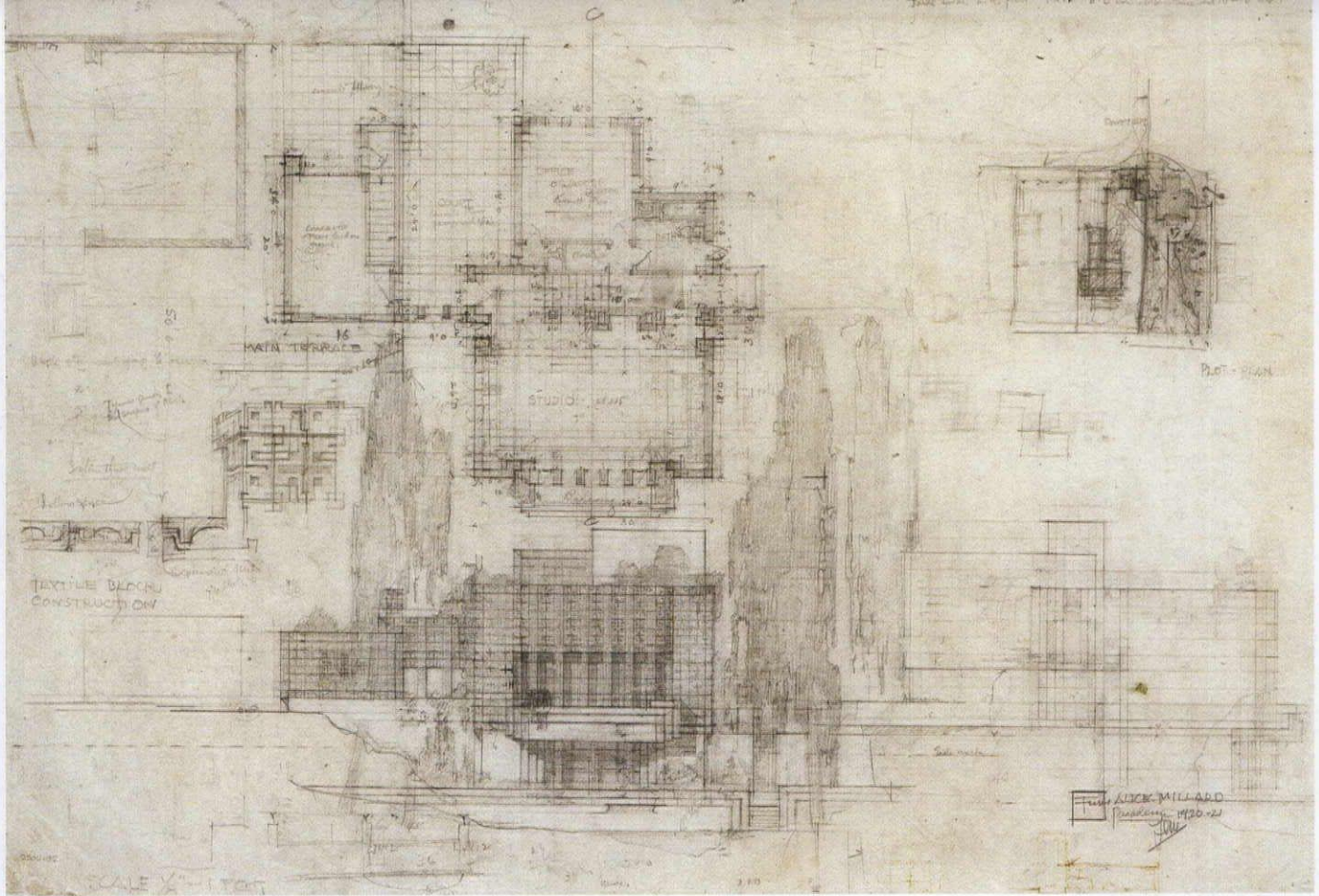
very special house,” he says. “Every window has a view that's like a landscape painting.”

What's more, here was an opportunity to own an American landmark and upgrade it to its full potential. “I knew that Frank Lloyd Wright had been influenced by Japanese design, but his knowledge only went so deep,” You says. “It is like a Western architect's view of Asian architecture and design. I knew I wanted to respect the way the house was built, but perhaps develop the garden, so that it integrates the interiors with the exteriors and draws more from Japanese and Chinese garden design.”

After much meticulous negotiation with the seller—You spoke in Mandarin to Chan, who then translated the Mandarin into English—the couple bought La Miniatura for \$3.6 million. “Another Chinese [buyer] might have come here and said, ‘It's an old damn building. I don't know who Frank Lloyd Wright is and the Pasadena school district is lousy. The house needs so much restoration. There's no way that I would buy this,’” says Chan. But You and Li knew better—and not only had the skills to tackle a restoration, but they were well aware that owning La Miniatura would elevate their standing among other Chinese, not to mention the international design cognoscenti. “How many Chinese have ever bought a house by Frank Lloyd Wright?” Chan continues. “Zero. Not one in all of China.” This was, indeed, a very prestigious purchase.



The Millard House aka La Miniatura, by Frank Lloyd Wright



Drawings of the Millard House, courtesy Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

It was also a purchase that surprised members of the architecture, design, and real-estate communities. "There's a stereotype that Asians only want McMansions in areas like Temple City and Arcadia," says one prominent broker, referring to popular suburban L.A. towns rich in *boba* and soup dumpling shops. Who knew that Asian emigres would choose high-maintenance historic homes over shiny new cookie-cutter digs that come heaped with must-have mod cons such as large master bedrooms, en suite baths with Jacuzzi tubs, central heat and air, marble floors, powder rooms, alarm systems, and a glitzy chandelier or two.

The usual Asian attraction to "new" is understandable. In cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Seoul, old dwellings have come to mean discomfort and overcrowding. Shanghai's French Concession was once lined with mansions from the 19th and early 20th century. During the Cultural Revolution, these grand houses were carved into tiny apartments, with 20 or more families occupying the same space. That meant one small room per family and dozens of people using the house's few bathrooms.

After economic reforms in the 1980s, modern high-rises began springing up across the city. The new buildings did not have the character or beauty of the older houses, but residents were no longer sharing one bathtub with six families. Another bonus: With brand new homes it was unlikely that anybody had ever died there—which, for many Asians who believe in spirits, was a real selling point.

So it's no wonder that when Asian economies began to soar, these émigrés bought new homes—the bigger, the better. As Shanghai-born Michael Chow, longstanding architecture aficionado and proprietor of a select string

of stylish Mr. Chow restaurants between Beverly Hills and London, explains, when people who have been living in oppressed or impoverished countries for decades emerge with newly minted wealth, "they become *nouveau riche*. You can't blame them—they've been hungry for so long."

So why the interest in older architectural houses now? For one thing, it stands to reason that with 18 million people of Asian descent living in America, not all prefer the allure of built-yesterday homes. And, like You and Li, many affluent Chinese, Japanese, and South Koreans have already bought their first houses in America, Australia or the U.K. as a foothold in a foreign land. Now, they want to purchase properties that are a step up—and historically significant or architecturally cool houses are considered status properties that reflect refinement and taste, like the mansions of the past.

"There's a new level of connoisseurship that is emerging from Asia," says Singapore-born author Kevin Kwan, whose bestselling novels, *Crazy Rich Asians* and *China Rich Girlfriend*, comically chronicle the lifestyles of the rich and Asian. "They've already bought the McMansion and the investment condo and now they want more," he says. "This is not just about investing and getting money out of China. This is about appreciating a lifestyle."

And it's making headlines. When 27-year-old Chinese mogul, Jin Lin, managing director of the property development company, Aqualand, spent a record \$52.5 million for Villa Igiea, a coveted 1920s harbor-front estate in Sydney, Australia, the deal even made Australia's evening news. "It's the kind of house that comes with bragging rights," Kwan says with a laugh. "There are only so many of these historical properties and to snag one is like snagging a trophy."

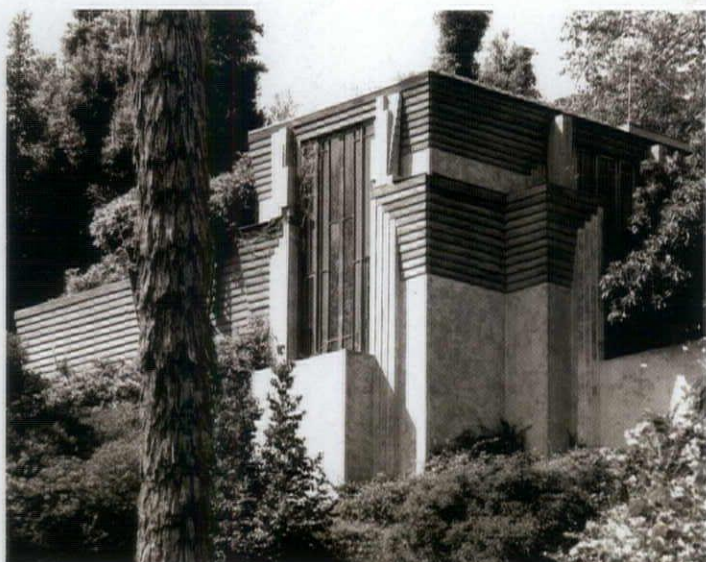


Photo: Crosby Doe

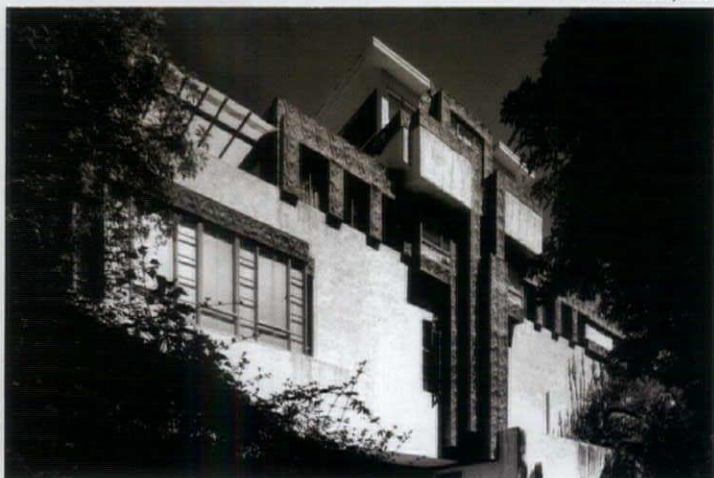
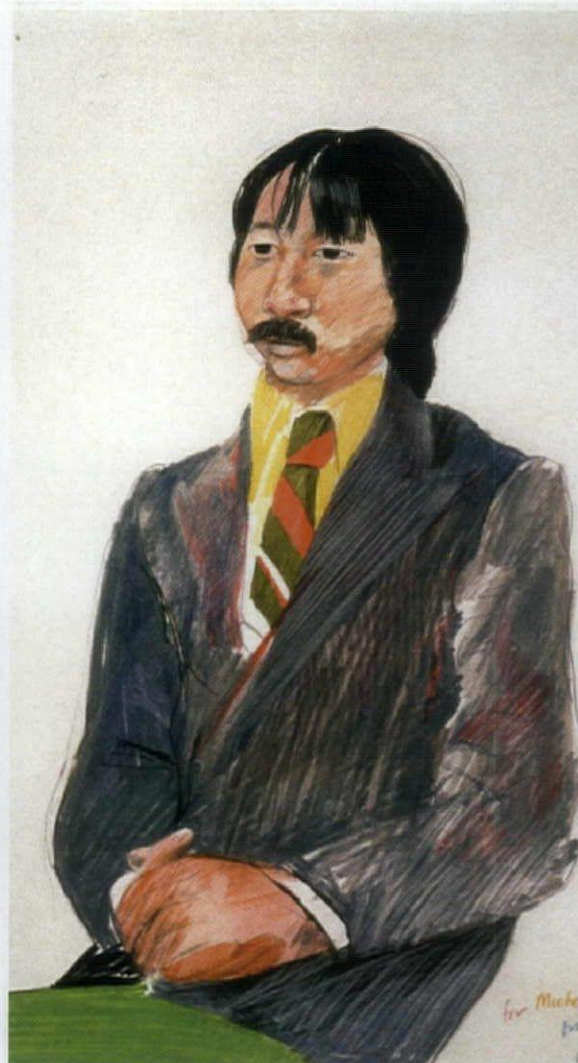


Photo: Julius Shulman



Portrait of Michael Chow by David Hockney

CHOW ON DESIGN

In 1968, Michael Chow opened the first Mr. Chow eatery in London, which he designed, covering the white walls with modern art by David Hockney, Jim Dine, and others, which set the tone for these clubby restaurants as much as the Pekinese cuisine did. As he opened additional locations in Beverly Hills, Malibu, New York, Las Vegas, and Mexico City, Chow became known as an obsessive art collector (Hockney portrait of him, left), as well as an early aficionado of architectural real estate in Los Angeles. Born in Shanghai as Zhou Yinghua (his father was Zhou Xinfang, one of China's most famous actors in his day and the leading figure at the Peking Opera), he purchased two classic Lloyd Wright homes in Los Feliz in the 1970s: The 1922 Taggart House (top, left) and the 1928 Novarro House (bottom, left). For him, the appeal was natural. Of the Novarro residence—originally built for early Hollywood screen idol Ramon Novarro and later owned by actresses Diane Keaton and Christina Ricci—Chow says that he was partly drawn to the hillside residence because its stunning chevron-patterned copper cladding reminded him of Asian design. "Frank Lloyd Wright and Lloyd Wright were very influenced by Japanese architecture, which in turn, was influenced by all things China," says Chow. "They were both Asian-driven architects."

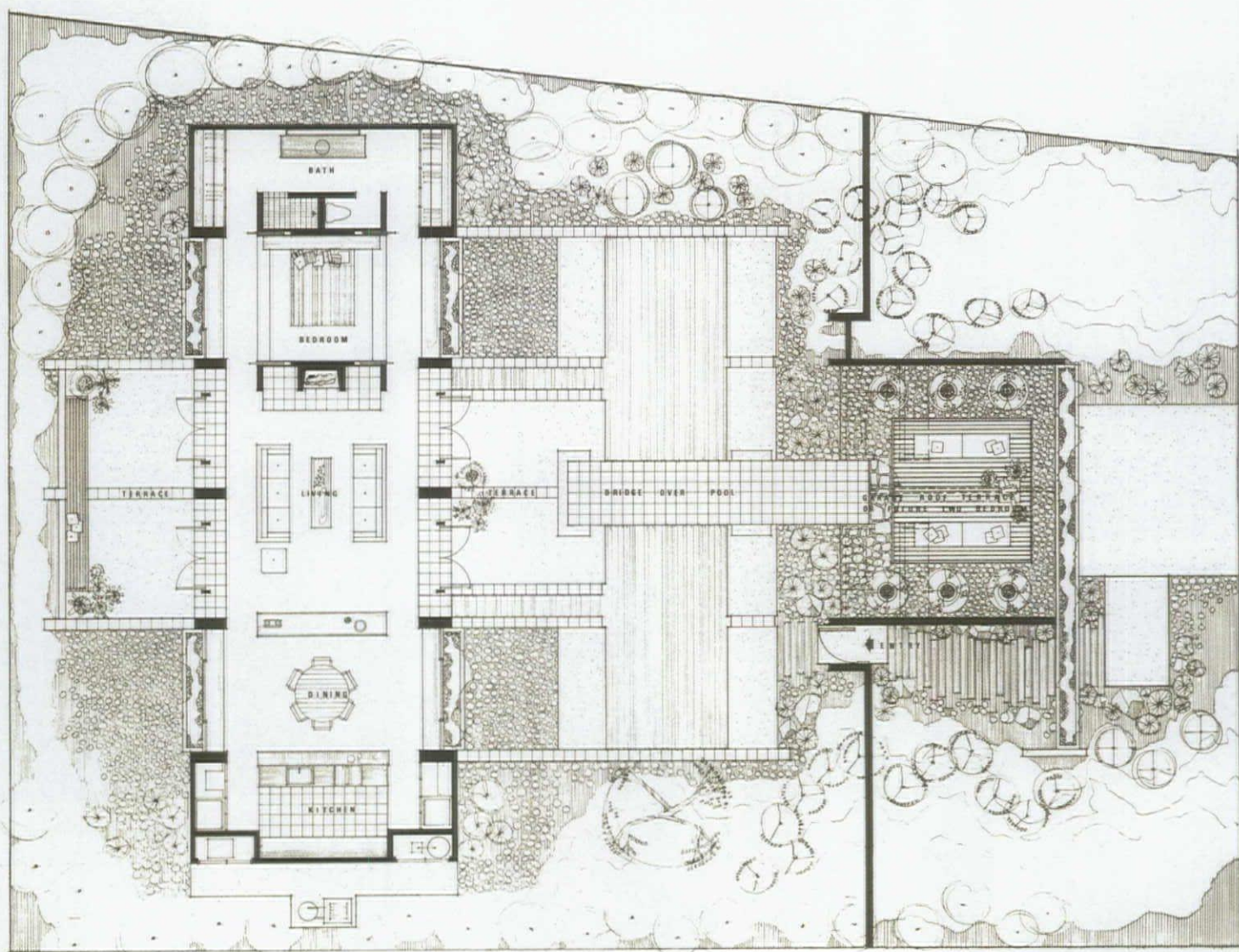
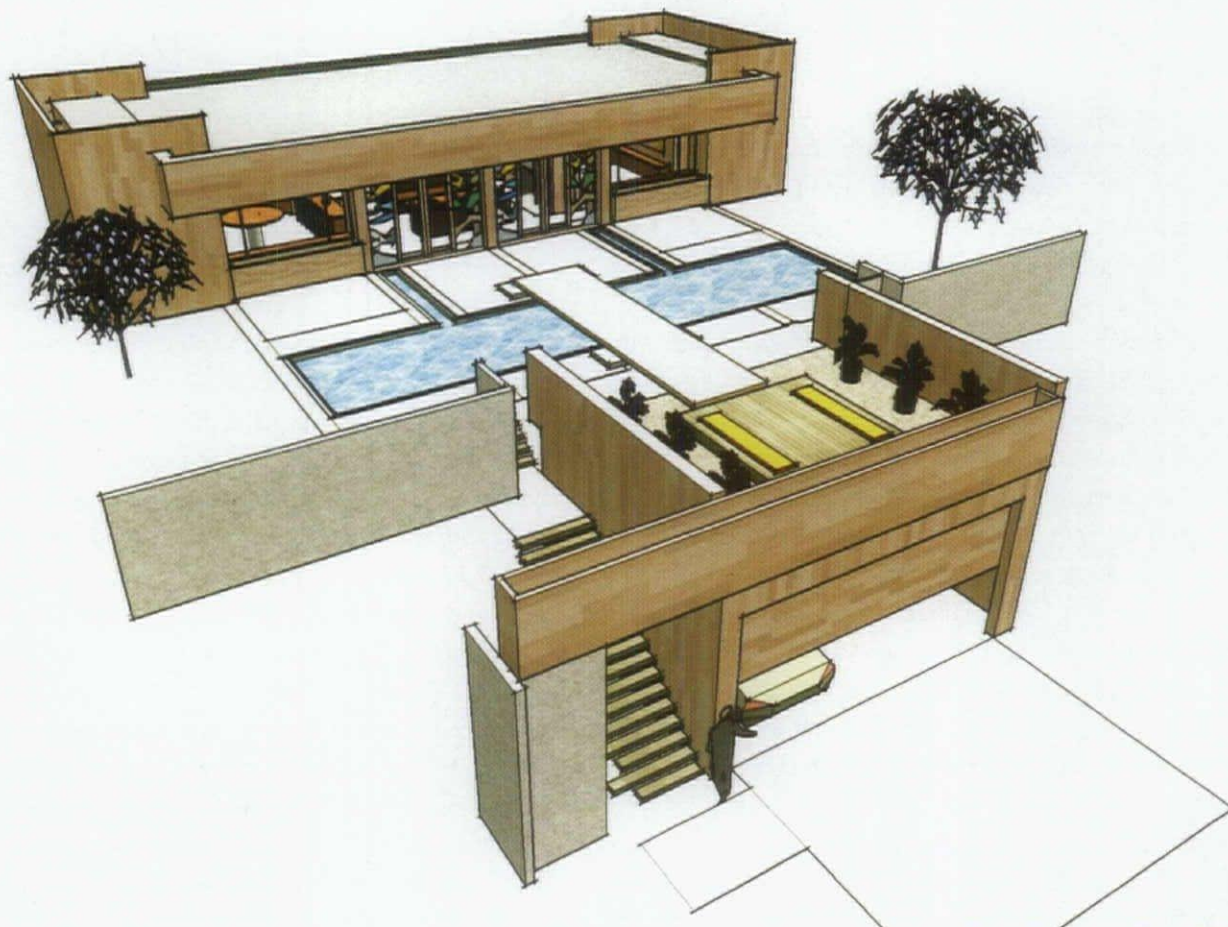




Photo courtesy Ping Fu

Three years ago, Nanjing-born Ping Fu snagged a remarkable 1975 Buff & Hensman house known as Domus Solaris—once described by *L.A. Curbed* as “achingly handsome”—in the Hollywood Hills. But the Chinese-American co-founder of 3D software development company Geomagic (which she sold in 2013) insists it wasn’t for the bragging rights.

As the tech entrepreneur recounts it, the Mullholland Drive residence (once Donald Hensman’s own bachelor pad) had been owned by her friend, former IMG sports agent Michael Rielly, who had bought the storied house in 2005 when it was in extreme disrepair. Curiously, though the previous owners were of Asian descent, they had misunderstood the residence, painting over the redwood and converting the sleek, but spare, one-bedroom abode into a three-bedroom family home (on the advice, no less, of a *feng shui* master who had advised them to add more doors and walls, lest all their money “blow away”). But that was then. Rielly spent years undoing the damage; and in 2014, when he decided to move to Berkeley, he listed the impeccably restored one-bedroom landmark for \$2.4 million. Fu saw photos of it on the internet and asked to visit the place before it sold.

Once she stepped inside, however, she didn’t want to leave. She sat on the couch and gazed out the floor-to-ceiling windows onto a heart-pounding view of sky and mountains. “It was so tranquil,” Fu recalls. When Rielly confided that he worried what would happen “if somebody buys [the house]

and destroys it,” she said impulsively, “Well, why don’t I buy it?” She had just sold her company and had the means. And somehow, it hardly mattered that she lived thousands of miles away in North Carolina with no plans to relocate.

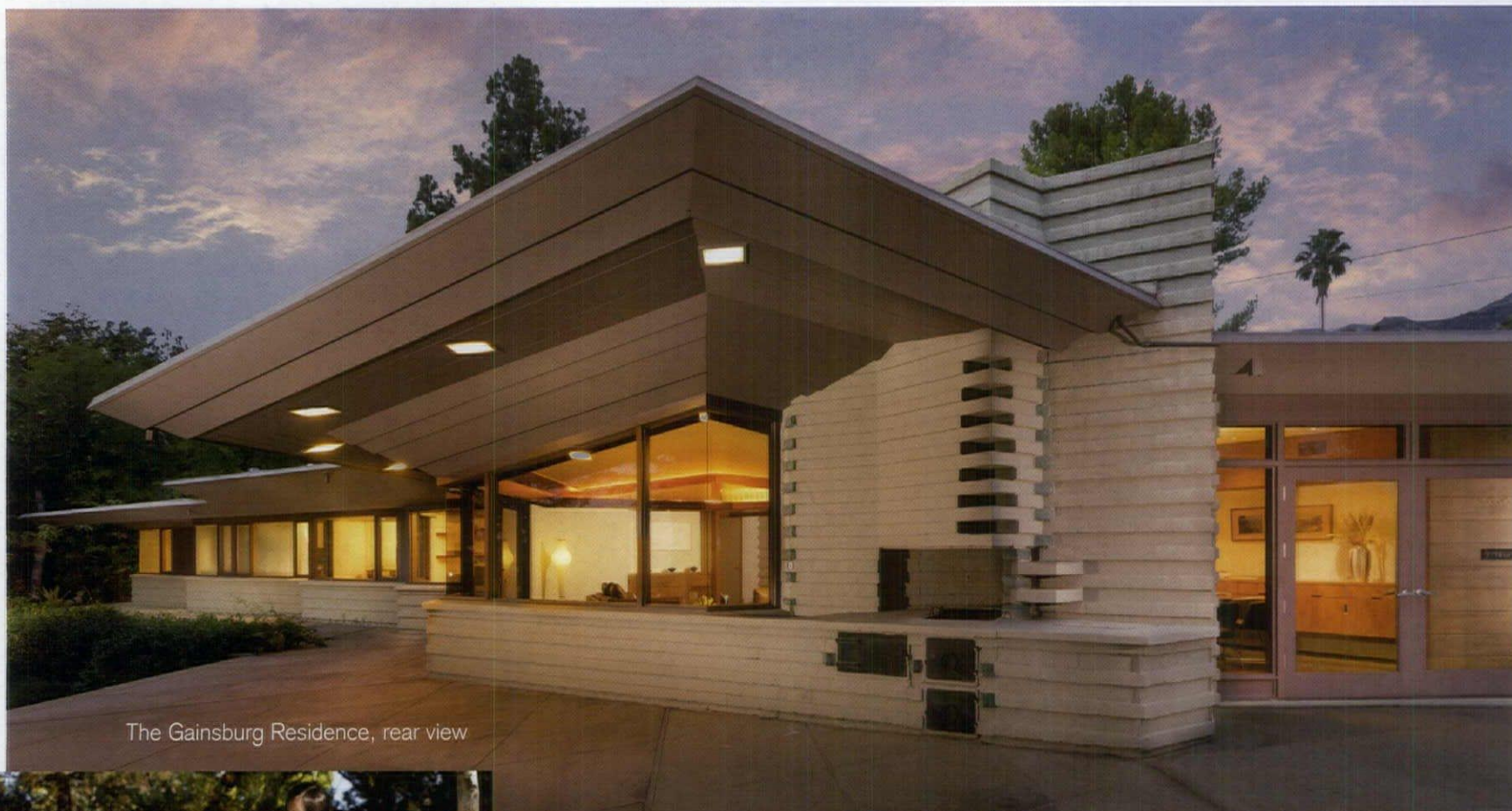
To her credit, Fu wasn’t just any home buyer with deep pockets. Though she had grown up in the luxury of her grandfather’s French-style home in Shanghai, she had never lived in a modern house. What’s more, her house in North Carolina was a 7,000 square-foot McMansion—the opposite of the minimalist Domus Solaris. But, as a worldly businesswoman, she appreciated the aesthetic of Donald Hensman’s design and understood the real importance of the property: It wasn’t just real estate, it was a one-of-a-kind piece of art created in kinship with its surroundings. “Mike asked me why I would buy a house in Los Angeles,” she remembers. “And I said, ‘I’m not buying a house. I’m buying a Picasso.’”

The deal went through in April 2014, with Rielly turning down higher offers. As destiny would have it, Fu’s company (she is now vice-president and CEO of 3D Systems) offered her the opportunity to move to Los Angeles in the summer of 2015. “It was karma,” she says. And though she had to purge many treasured belongings to fit into her 1,508-square-foot modern masterpiece, Fu says, “When I bought the house, I thought of it as art. [Now] every time I move through the rooms, I feel life’s rhythm, I feel poetry. It is magical.”





Domus Solaris by Buff & Hensman



The Gainsburg Residence, rear view



Eugene and Sophie Park

South Korea-born Sophie Park left Seoul when she was in her late teens to study at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). In Providence, she noticed that students often rented out the Victorian houses in the historic district. "I thought to myself, 'What is so wonderful about those places?' They looked old and creaky. Everything was broken. I really did not see the big deal."

After college, Sophie married attorney Eugene Park and the couple moved into a luxurious Manhattan high-rise. But in 2014, with three children in tow, the Parks relocated to ritzy La Cañada, CA., where they rented a 6,000-square-foot Spanish-style home. "We were not in a hurry to buy," says Sophie, who decided to get acquainted with the real-estate market first. When she came across a listing for a 3,172-square-foot mid-century classic by Lloyd Wright—she knew Frank Lloyd Wright's work, but not his also-famous son's—she went to see it right away.

Park, who had become enamored of mid-century furniture design while studying painting at RISD, remembers that pivotal visit: "It reminded me instantly of my grandfather's house, which he had built from scratch in the middle of rice fields outside Seoul. An architect had designed it for him in the 1970s but it was very modern."

While newish La Cañada ranch houses were getting snapped up as soon as they hit the market, the 1946 Lloyd Wright languished in the listings. "We were stunned that nobody had taken it," she says. Though the \$2.395 million

asking price was beyond their budget, the couple took a leap of faith. "We understood the value—[and] we knew that something like this would not come back on the market again."

Today, she considers living in the Lloyd Wright to be something of a homecoming. "My grandfather's house was built just after the Japanese occupation of Korea and there is some overlap in design. Frank Lloyd Wright and Lloyd Wright were both influenced by the Japanese—and that sensibility resonates throughout the house for me." In America, she has found the house that she thought only lived in her memories.

This sensory connection is common. Not infrequently, Asians in search of Western homes often respond to houses that remind them of places they once knew. "I've often observed that people try to recreate the environment in which they were the happiest or felt the most secure," says author Kwan, who grew up in a charming Singapore bungalow that "shaped my lifestyle." While he now lives in a Manhattan apartment, he claims "it has a tropical 1950s modern feel to it"—not unlike his Singapore digs.



Heineman Residence c. 1917



This kind of personal connection is what drew Annie Yan to purchase a stunning 1917 Alfred Heineman mansion in Pasadena that's listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Shanghai-born real-estate investor, who already owns other properties in the area, toured the 1917 Arts and Crafts property and instantly fell in love. "I appreciate the artistry and the history of the house," says Yan, who recalls childhood days walking around the French Concession of Shanghai with her family. Her parents were both blue-collar workers and home was a small row house, but they would marvel at the European mansions lining the Concession. "They had such a romance to them," she says, practically sighing at the memory.

Back then, China was closed off to America and Yan could not even dream of buying a house in the West. However, by the time relations changed, Yan's fortunes had grown and she took the opportunity to visit

Europe and America. "I wanted to learn as much as I could about the West," she says.

Yan and her husband own a luxury home in Shanghai, but it is not especially noteworthy. "Everyone lives in an apartment," she says, pointing out that few people can live in the historic, grand colonial mansions that remain in the Chinese city. "Those old houses are now used as hotels, institutes, embassies or museums," she says. "The inventory is extremely low and the prices are extremely high. And then you have to pay an extra few million to remodel it."

Yan wasn't looking to buy a landmark property in California. But the Heineman house with its rolled rooftop, gables, beamed ceilings and picture windows, captivated her. "It had a certain *da qi*," she says, calling on the Chinese phrase for *elegance*. "I appreciate its character and age."





The Gainsburg Residence by Lloyd Wright

Coralie Langston-Jones,
Brett Wickens and family



Photo: Daniel Dent

Hong Kong-born Coralie Langston-Jones shares a similar sensibility. As the daughter of a Malaysian-Chinese mother and a British father, she has been aware of many Asian buyers' seeming preference for elaborate digs and flashy trappings since childhood. Growing up in the former British colony, she lived with her parents and two brothers in a spacious flat in the manicured Mid-Levels, where a mixture of well-to-do Chinese and Brits resided. "Most of the families of my Hong Kong friends had good taste," says Langston-Jones, the founder of Social Blueprint, a publicity firm that has represented such design clients as Marmol Radziner Architects and Heath Ceramics. "However, I remember when I would go trick or treating in our block of flats each Halloween, we would get a glimpse into our neighbors' houses. While the expat homes were not much different from ours, the Chinese homes fascinated me. It was mainly in the materials, like their use of polished marble everywhere, gold leaf decorative features, and elaborate front-door grills."

Langston-Jones attributes these differences to Chinese cultural priorities. "Being half-Chinese myself, I have a deep appreciation for how the Chinese like to present their best sides to the world and this would include the way they like to house themselves and what sort of image it portrays to the outside world." The fancier the home, says Langston-Jones, the more it "conveys success, prosperity, and pride."

But she also had formative experiences with architecture that showed her a world beyond all that glitters. As a child, she often visited her mother's homeland. In Kuala Lumpur, she learned to admire traditional British

Colonial-era houses. "My family lived in one of these old houses before I was born and they were surrounded by sprawling gardens, complete with ornamental orchid patches," she says. "You could always get to the garden from any room on the ground floor. This did mean encountering unwelcome animals, like hungry monkeys, cobras, and the occasional kingfisher bird—and many locals don't like these houses for this reason." But Langston-Jones' early experiences with such gracious tropical houses established her life-long adoration of homes with indoor-outdoor flow. "I've always felt that proximity to nature is the ultimate luxury," she remarks.

So when she and her Canadian husband, Brett Wickens, moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, they single-mindedly sought a Joseph Eichler house in San Rafael. "We bought it when it was 40 years old and knew that every part of the house would be near the end of its life," she says. So the couple ended up replacing—and upgrading—virtually every surface in the house, both interior and exterior. "I can hear my Malaysian mother tut-tutting about old houses," she says, laughing.

But after a costly and meticulously planned renovation, the house is now their dream home—it has even appeared on the much-coveted cover of *Elle Decoration* in the U.K. "Buying this sort of home was an entirely considered purchase," says Langston-Jones. But now, she and her family can gaze out the floor-to-ceiling windows at the striking hills and lush trees with great appreciation and fulfillment. "We can enjoy beautiful views of the valley from every room in our house," she says. "I'm glad Brett and I made our own assessments and opted for a vintage-era house."

Of course, skeptics might say that many deep-pocketed Asian buyers may only be investing in properties for the financial returns, without any soulful or creative connection to the houses. "When you are a collector, you know the price will always go up," says restaurateur Chow, one of L.A.'s first Asian buyers of architectural or historic homes, who admits his collectible Lloyd Wright properties (see sidebar, page 27) eventually sold for a considerable profit. "You will never lose money. Generally speaking, collectors' items appreciate by a greater margin. I think that's why Asians are now buying these landmark houses—that, and because they are insecure and so go for name brands."

What's more, most landmark properties are protected by historical societies and typically cost a sizable amount to restore and maintain, so few would attract Asian buyers only interested in flipping them. Says author Kwan, "These historic-home purchases are about much more than square footage or buying for the sake of investment. This is the next step up. All

the good houses in Shanghai and Singapore are taken already. This is about snagging a trophy and building a legacy."

David You agrees. While he doesn't plan on living in La Miniatura personally, he hopes to house visiting Chinese relatives and friends there. Before that happens, however, he wants to develop the gardens and add a pool. "I plan to respect Frank Lloyd Wright's vision but the house also needs to progress into the 21st century," he says.

"A lot of people tried to talk me out of buying the house," says You, stepping onto La Miniatura's sun-dappled terrace and taking in the view. "They said it was going to be a lot of *mafan*," he adds, calling on the Mandarin word for *bother*. "But I felt that as an architect I could take this on." His ultimate justification for the significant investment of time, effort, and money required to restore the concrete-block masterpiece? He pauses to take in the architectural splendor of the Frank Lloyd Wright home and his subsequent words seem to echo through the ravine: "*I love this house.*" **af**

Photo: Scott Mayoral



The Millard House's pond-view terrace

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WEST WORLD

With this 1968 Bell Canyon model home and its master-planned recreational surroundings, *Cliff May* took the suburban ranch to the next level—and further defined Western living.





Written by **Andrea Hunter Dietz**

Photographs by **Cameron Carothers**

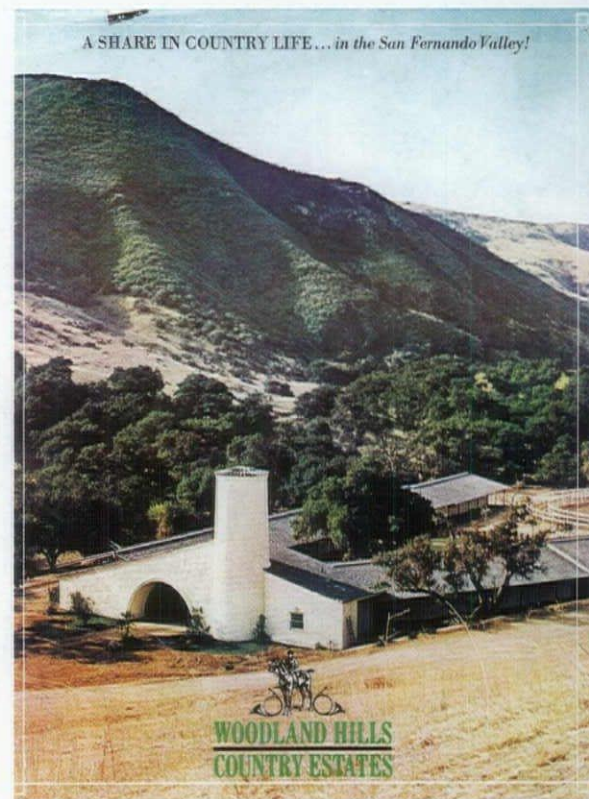
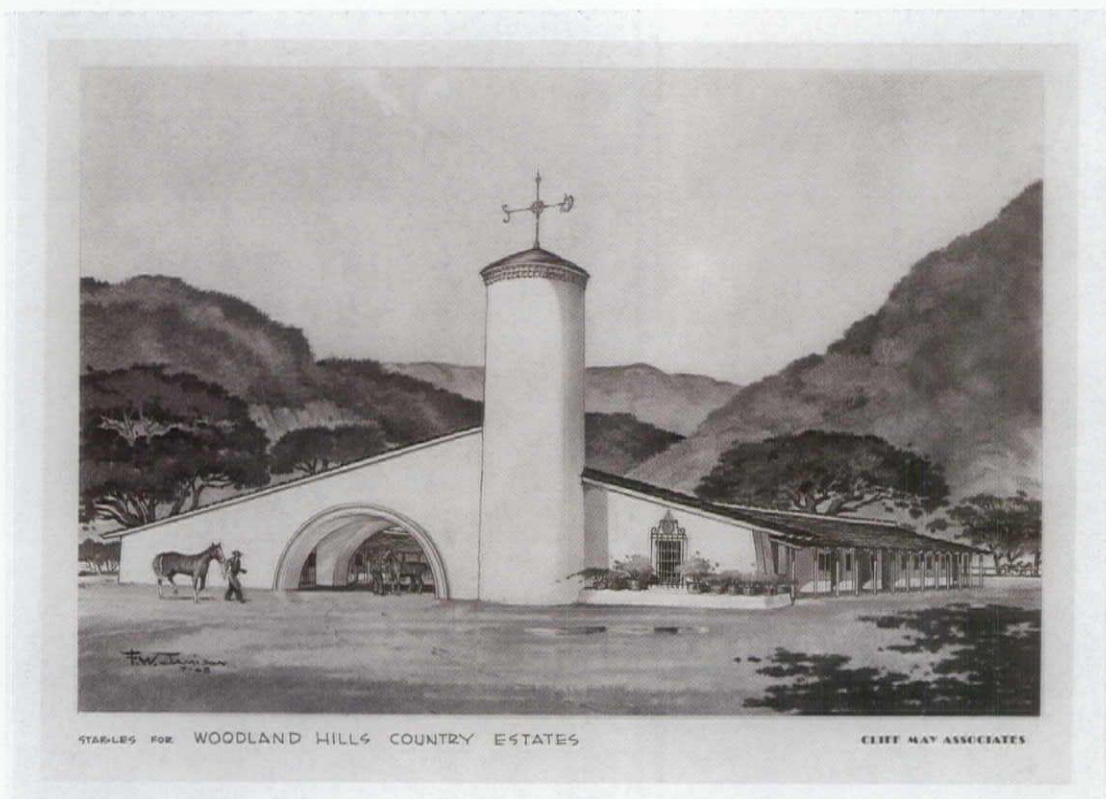




Sheltered beneath ancient oaks, the low, white ranch house with the concrete tile roof does not broadcast its architectural import. Yet this unpretentious residence, set well back from the road in a guard-gated community on the edge of the San Fernando Valley, is an essential key to the Western architectural landscape. With its use of textured masonry, rustic board, and discreetly placed apertures, it may look at first like an everyday suburban house. But it is familiar precisely because it is an originator of the now ubiquitous ranch typology. A signature Cliff May—built as the model home for the Bell Canyon development in 1968—the five-bedroom residence is a progenitor of the suburban aesthetic and offspring of a mid-century design competition that would influence American taste for decades to come. It is also part of a community that incorporates Cliff May's idealized vision of modern Western living—including 35 miles of bridle paths that give easy access to nature, tennis courts, private playgrounds within a creekside park and a community center with a fully-equipped gymnasium. The community even stages chili cook-offs and has been known to import snow for childrens' play during the winter holidays. Such amenities and practices make it a portal into the populist Utopia of the recent past.

The Bell Canyon model home was built in the latter phase of Cliff May's career, towards the bottom of the post-war housing boom in the San Fernando Valley. It was part of an agreement between Cliff May Associates and R. A. Watt Company, a real estate development organization, to design the basic infrastructure for a 1,700-acre community with 800 properties and mini-ranches along the Bell Creek headwaters of the Los Angeles River. The land had been purchased the year before by Boise Cascade Company and the Spruce Land Corporation to subdivide and sell as parcels. Donald MacAdam, the Division Manager of Lot Sales with R. A. Watt hired May, a friend, to imprint a master-planned recreational community with his Western signature.

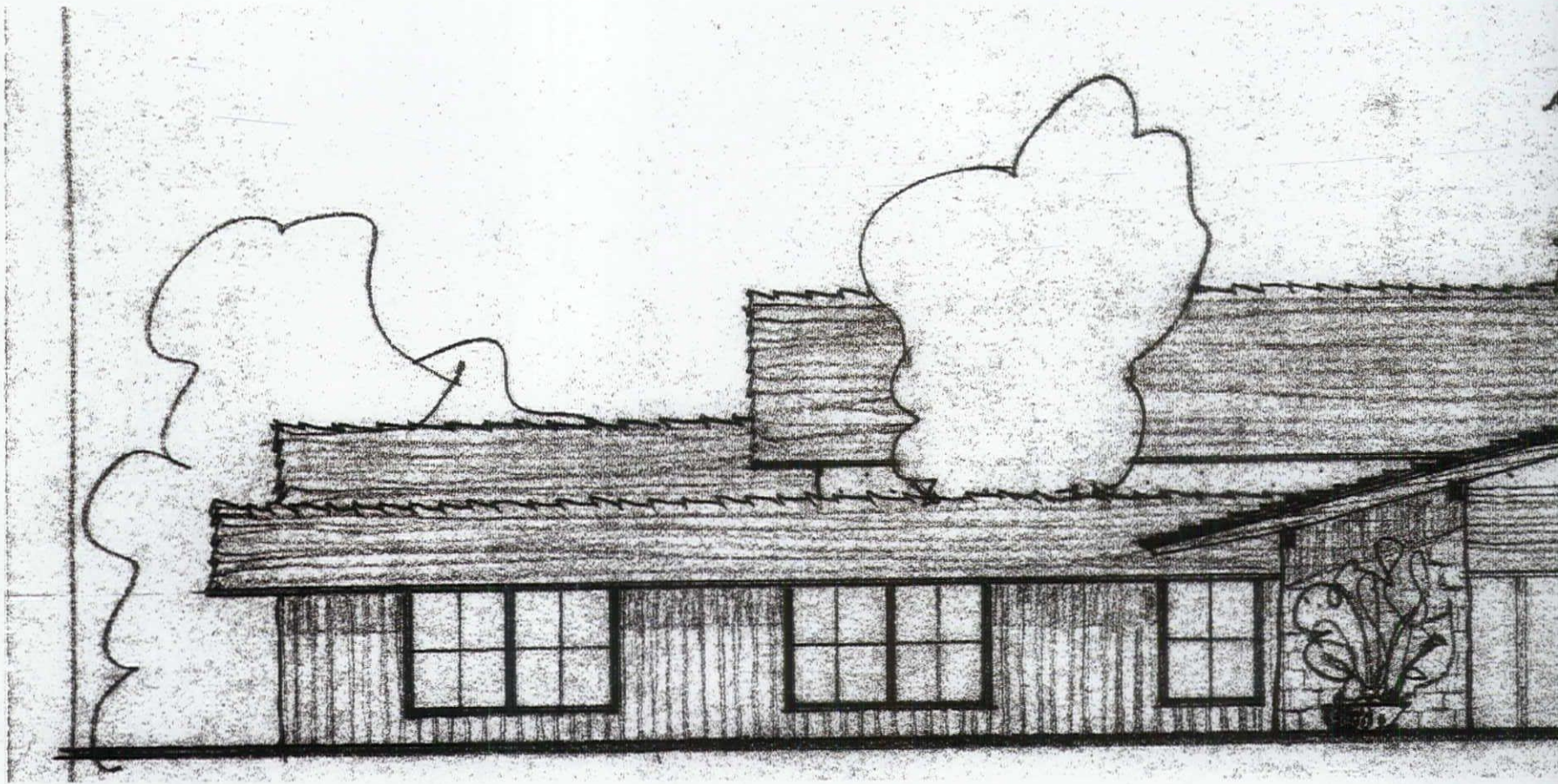
True to the tenets of the times, the Bell Canyon home was designed to show off the potential for the individual experience in the modern West and was devised as the gateway to a new, immersive world. Along with the community center and equestrian facility, May provided enough elements to suggest a rustic lifestyle and the leisurely ambience that would attract mainstream buyers.



With its sweeping arched-bar entrance and prominent mission-like tower, the equestrian facility, a 120-stall barn surrounded by paddocks and riding rings, is a clear reference to the Robert Mondavi Winery—a grand yet wistful compound in northern California that May had finished in 1966. The community center, a courtyard round-up of assembly spaces, echoes May's iconic *Sunset* magazine headquarters or "Laboratory for Western Living" that he completed in Menlo Park,

California, that same year. The overall community organization of loose lots and winding lanes, reiterates the strolling strategy for land use that May had been perfecting since his early subdivision success with the Riviera Ranch community in L.A.'s Brentwood neighborhood in 1940. The concept relies on May's driving strategy for design—meandering streets, picturesque view corridors and architecture that frames and captures the natural surroundings.

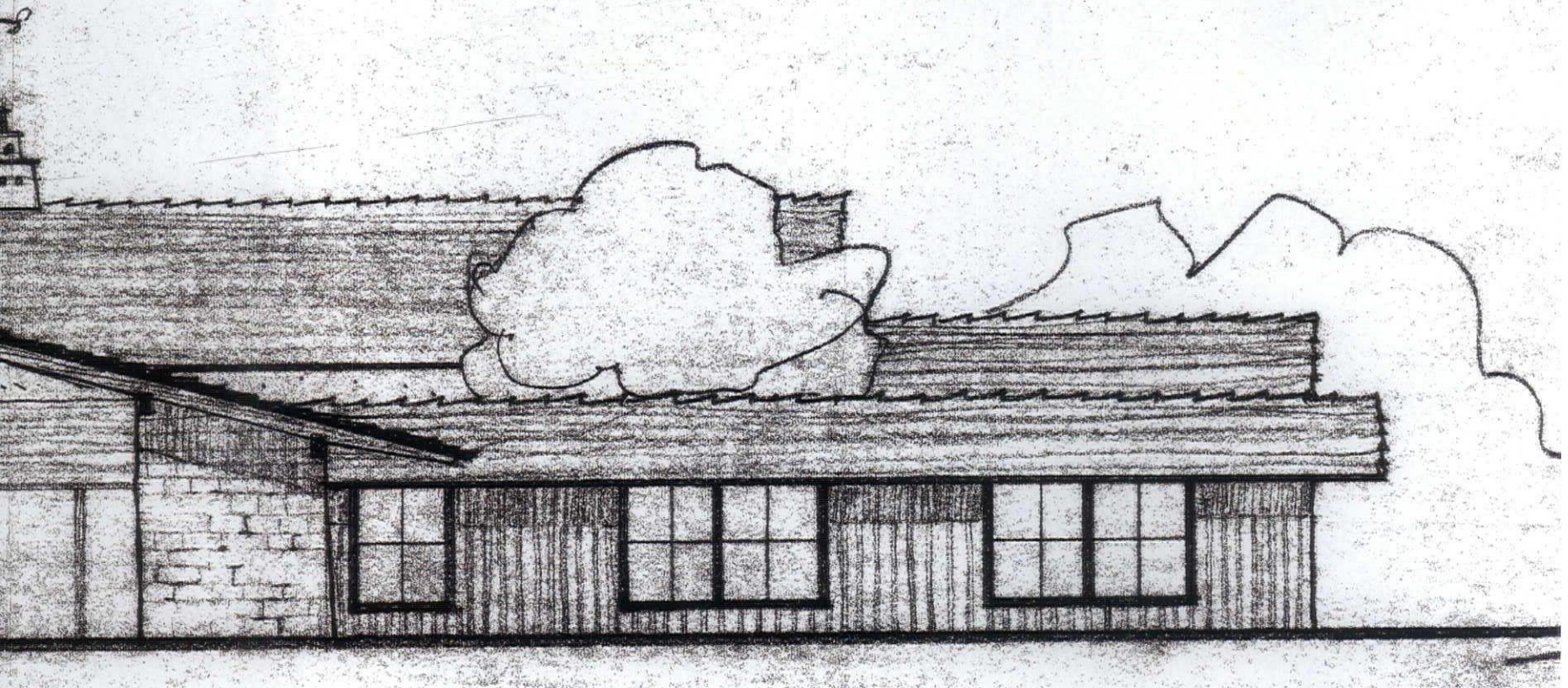




Cliff May Presentation Drawing of Bell Canyon Community Center. Cliff May Papers. Collection of the UCSB Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB



Bell Canyon Community Center



With the Bell Canyon model home, May rolled out the design strategies intrinsic to his ranch canon. Sharing much in common with his previous work, its main formal concept is that of the characteristic splayed U—with an extra appendage that turns the overall aerial view of the house into a disjointed F. The distinguishing wing, separated from the primary living arms by a breezeway, ties the house to the horse-oriented village of which it is part by a three-car garage and two-stall stables that link up with the neighborhood roadway and bridle trails. The other branches of the house are functionally divided into lines of utility (kitchen, dining, and service), gathering (living), and retreat (bedrooms). The sequence of these rooms rambles across the property landscape, stepping subtly up and down in sync with the ground plane and activity zones of the house. Its intimate interiors are arranged to spill casually into the courtyard patio and pool. Deep overhangs and May's signature roof ridgeline apertures next to the beams create a play of shade and light, an extensive balance of inside and out.

The Bell Canyon model home and surrounding community are the winning vestiges of a postwar ideological campaign. The mass housing shortage that plagued the United States after World War II inspired a tussle for the direction of American residential form and style in the modern era. This battle, waged largely on the pages of journals and magazines, leveled competing visions for the new private home. *Arts & Architecture* ran the Case Study House Program from 1945 to 1966, during which editor-publisher John Entenza promoted 36 architect-designed living experiments that aspired to reflect the times in their material expression and social-spatial organization. The Case Study House Program, however, while paradigmatic in architecture culture and 20th-century design history, had limited lasting impact on the popular psyche.

The more notable influence on the at-large residential dream came from two mainstream lifestyle publications: *House Beautiful's* Pace Setter House Program and *Sunset* magazine's focus on the "Western Ranch Houses." In 1946, Elizabeth Gordon, *House Beautiful's* editor, announced the Pace Setter House program as the embodiment of American democratic achievement and a contrast to the Case Study House program—which she considered to be elitist. The less polemic *Sunset* magazine's "Western Ranch Houses" followed suit shortly thereafter with a book compilation of model homes that it enthusiastically presented to the nation as the new vernacular. Both magazines claimed their primary exemplar in Cliff May.



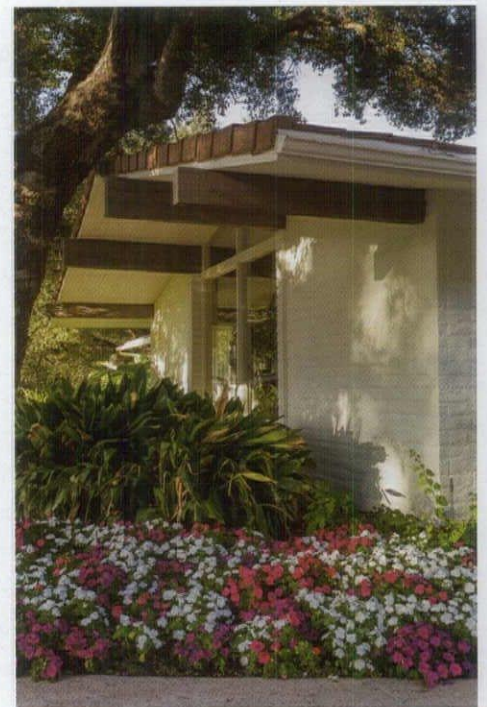


Cliff May was everything the home-style advocates wanted in a champion. Responding to America's newly minted global leadership status, *House Beautiful* and *Sunset* magazine found in the San Diego-born designer/builder a unique voice of the American West. He was an ahead-of-his-time personality—collaborative, entrepreneurial, resourceful. He was a dogged polymath and restless self-starter who took up architecture and development without formal training and with a distaste for the boxes of "legitimate architecture" that he once called "ignorant of tradition and terrain." A sixth-generation Californian whose family roots dated back to the Spanish claim of San Diego, May had cowboy credentials as well. Having grown up with a full-access pass to the spoils of the frontier and an appreciation of its characters and environment, he had the authority to entice the masses with his casual, carefree concept of the New West.

As a young man, May was nurtured by the haciendas, rancherías, and landscapes that emblemized regional origins. This formative background cultivated his sensibilities for distilling the qualities of Southern California living. It gave him perspective on the area's population growth and fed the career that he made of modeling ambitions and ideals for the new recruits. May established himself as the source of guidance to the Western transplant and, in turn, to a world of emulators.

By the time May was put up against the case study houses as the bearer of the authentic image for American living, the 38-year-old designer was already a prolific contributor to the trajectory of local

building patterns. In 1936, *Sunset* magazine had declared May the "Father of California Ranch Houses" while still only years into the business. He had gotten his improbable start by dropping out of business school and launching a "Monterey" line of furniture just as the Great Depression hit. With the odds-defying support of his father-in-law, family friends and a growing network of personal connections, furniture led to housing and housing led to development. After just five years, he had built more than 50 homes. At the urging of John A. Smith, client-turned-business partner/patron, May relocated in 1937 to Los Angeles, where he capitalized on the tools and momentum at the seat of the culture industry and steadily established a record of both custom and speculative building that would prepare him for his post-war prominence.









Through the attention of the *House Beautiful* and *Sunset* housing crusade, May broke out of the regional corral and landed as a fixture on coffee tables across the country. The message that accompanied these features—that heritage and contemporary convenience, dignity and informality, individualism and belonging could all coexist in one package—struck a chord with a nation seeking post-war romance and optimism. That the emergence of the American West was already underway—in music, movies, dime novels, fashion, and children's games—meant that the average imagination associated the ranch house with freedom and heroism. The two publications tapped this *zeitgeist*.

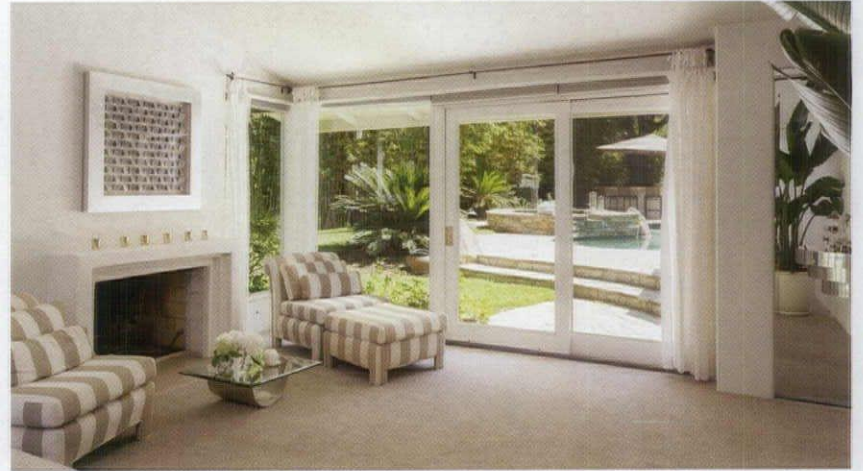
House Beautiful shared its residential formula in a room-by-room assessment of the original Pace Setter, a May-designed construction, this way: "Seldom is there a house so well thought out and so soundly executed that *House Beautiful* feels enthusiastic enough to sponsor, decorate, and exhibit it. But here is just such a house. It embodies basic principles which epitomize the best thinking of our times. These principles, if scaled down in size or slightly adapted in plan or specification, can apply to all pocketbooks, all climates. Study how it can better your living. Above all, try to visualize the social values that such a house represents. For houses and people are inseparable."

With this pledge of allegiance to May, *House Beautiful* set the new ethic for American housing. Homes should be comfortable, more than impressive. Their details and performance—from fixtures to organization—should reinforce the values of family, cleanliness, and ritual. Cheer, in the form of color, light, and pattern, is the essential décor. And, under

the heading of "The Advantages of Turning Your Back on the World," *House Beautiful* posited the Pace Setter as a marvel in reconciling the conflicts of openness and exposure (both to the elements and as a privacy concern) with internal courtyard fluidity and outward-facing boundaries.

Sunset magazine's "Western Ranch Houses," on the other hand, presented a six-point ranch-house philosophy, a.k.a. "Western solutions to Western problems," through which it sought to address livability over image and form. It itemized the amenities of the ranch, declaring that it be fitted to the site, show a blank façade to the public, be built of natural materials, offer compartmentalized activity zones in which the patio is key. It demonstrated the flexibility of these ideas through photographs and text tours of 17 Cliff May homes and in a portfolio of nine adaptable plans. By disclosing May's alphabet technique of reorienting the one-room-wide rambling wings of his designs into A's, S's, U's, V's, Y's, and Z's according to the conditions of site, it liberated would-be occupants to adapt and tailor the standardized to their personal needs.

The magazine movement marked the galvanizing moment of Cliff May's career. The vast majority of the 1,000 buildings for which he was lead designer and the 18,000 that were developed from his licensed designs, trace their story to the manifesto spreads of those pages. And the notoriety that it bestowed on May propelled him, in 1952, into the Cliff May Homes / Ranch House Sales venture with associate architect Chris Choate. This combination development-brokerage endeavor was wildly prosperous, dominating the housing scene across the American South and Southwest for years.



Though the Bell Canyon project came to be in the waning years of the ranch house boom and was not a portfolio or publicity job, it nonetheless reflects May's unstinting efforts. His plans and renderings carry the careful lines of a storyteller with a fantasy to share. The project management notes that document the progress of the development are filled with brainstorming scribbles that trace his evolving concepts and details. The correspondence archive is a log of diligence, friendly professionalism and respectful reprimand—especially when May's rusticated fixture and material specifications were substituted with contemporary standards—e.g., "[Cliff May Associates] should be advised before masonry work, plastering, and painting commence in order to control the effect. After all, [R. A. Watt Company has] made a considerable investment in order to have Cliff May buildings representative of [this] beautifully located development and it is our objective that they also represent the best that Cliff May buildings can express."

May extended these considerable wrangling talents to impel the draw to, and anchor the tenor of, the "Woodland Hills Country Estates." It worked. The R. A. Watt Company sold nearly all of their 800 lots in 10 days. Shortly thereafter, the newly formed neighborhood association renamed the community Bell Canyon after one of the site's early homesteaders. And, even though, in the absence of a founding covenant, some of

the sensitivities to May's master plan fell by the wayside, his touch remains evident. Current-day Bell Canyon is an inhabitable legacy; it is a guide to the hopes, dreams, and rationales of 20th-century America. In a phenomenon of dislocation, it is a stepping away from the surrounding megalopolis and into a pastoral otherworld. In this land, doors are unlocked; the sounds from the street are those of the rhythmic pacing of the passing horse and rider; neighbors actually gather for, of all things, pie-eating contests. A material and operational didactic, Bell Canyon is the constructed history of how to live in the West.

It is also something more. Bell Canyon and its model home are an unusual opportunity to experience not just the mythical West of Cliff May, but a chance to reinvent the past and make it modern. And perhaps it is not a coincidence that Bell Canyon occupies the same ground as Hu'wam, an indigenous Chumash settlement that dates back 8,000 years; it sits in the shadows of the hallowed geology of El Escorpión Peak and is not far from the Burro Flats Painted Cave and its ancient pictographs. In other words, Bell Canyon is both the idealized and realistic West with all its complications. It is all of the ingredients for understanding American origins. Like Cliff May himself, it sets up circumstances wherein contradictions might peaceably coexist: nature and civilization, privacy and expanse, activity and leisure, comfort and conflict, and even the sacred and profane. At its best, it is a teacher with the potential to inspire. **mf**



98 Bell Canyon Road — Bell Canyon, California

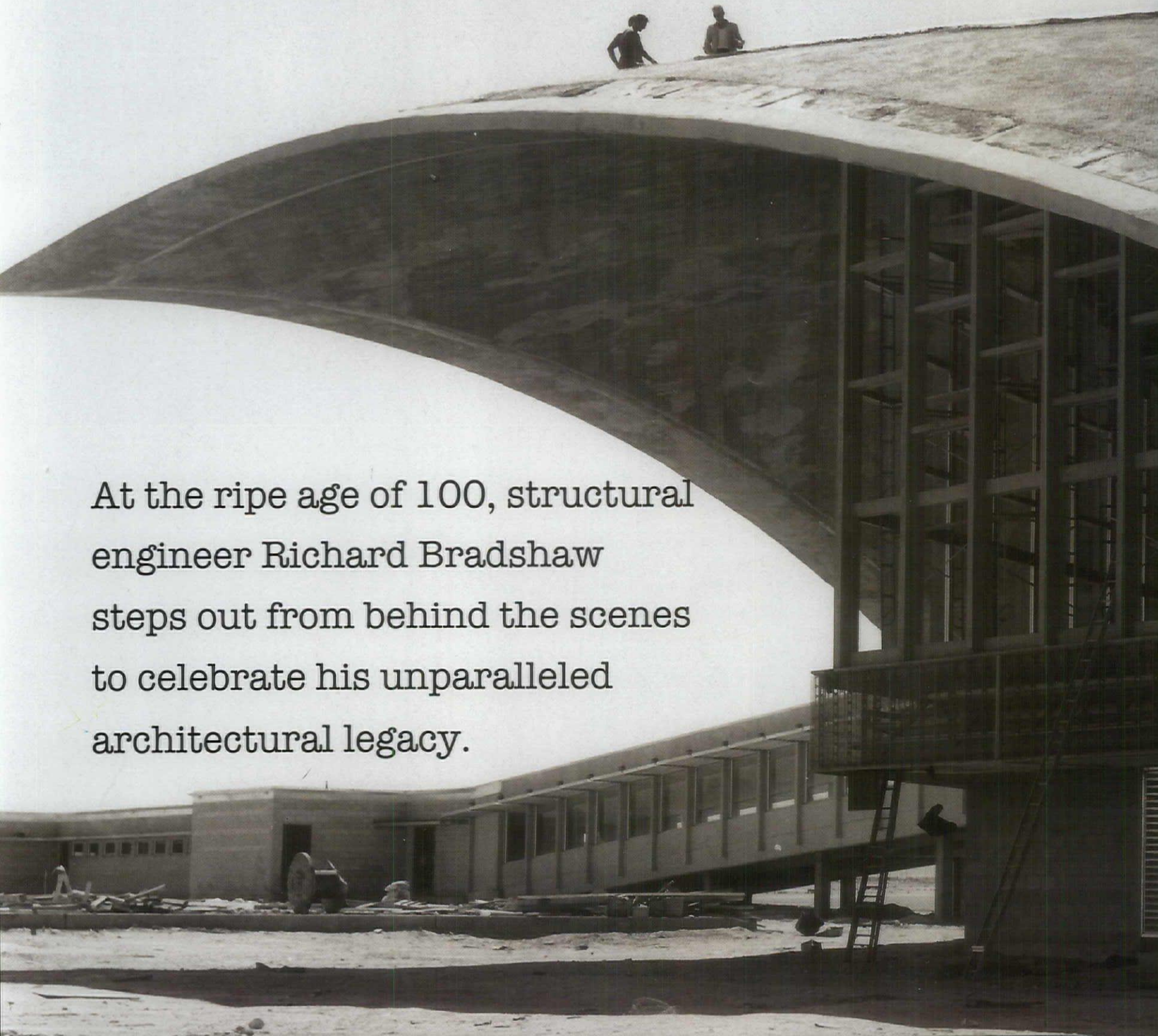
Bedrooms:	5
Baths:	5
Parking:	3 Car Garage

arch.forsale/address/1127

MAN *of the* CENTURY

Written by Pierluigi Serraino, AIA

At the ripe age of 100, structural engineer Richard Bradshaw steps out from behind the scenes to celebrate his unparalleled architectural legacy.



From the beginning of his career, Bradshaw enabled architects to add to the unique structural iconography of Los Angeles.

“If I had to do it all over again,” says Richard Bradshaw, “I would become an architect.”

These are powerful words coming from the low-key structural engineer who, having worked closely with architectural masters such as Richard Neutra, Carl Maston, Welton Becket, Paul Williams, A. Quincy Jones, and John Lautner over many years, quietly turned 100 last September. He is sitting in the dining room of his art-filled Northridge, California, home, shortly before his birthday, a humble, well-traveled man with silver hair who can still easily recount the course of his long and distinguished career. “I learned an awful lot from architects,” he explains. “My training was entirely engineering, but my attitude toward things was more like an architect. The engineers and I just did not have that much in common. The idea of trying new things, experimenting, having a fresh approach to things, came more from the architects than from the engineers—it is taken for granted in architecture.”

The difference between engineers and architects is an age-old conundrum. Structures alone do not architecture make, yet there is no architecture without structure. And while we know the names of the architects who design the buildings we admire, we are hard-pressed to identify the engineers who helped realize those designs. Frank Gehry, for example, gets all the adulation for the DZ Bank building in Berlin, while Jörg Schlaich, the structural engineer who painstakingly executed his design—and who incidentally worked on the ultra-famous tensile structures envisioned by Frei Otto for the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich—hardly gets a mention.

Then there is Richard Bradshaw, whose lifetime of work and professional gravitas as the most sought-after engineer of mid-century modernist architects on the West Coast should have earned him wide, enduring acclaim. Yet his name and reputation remain relatively under the radar, even among the most zealous aficionados of California modernism. His singular touch can be found in the iconicity of the LAX Theme Building by Pereira & Luckman, the Tarzana Ice Rink by Carl

Maston, the Los Angeles County Hall of Records by Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander, the Shorecliff Tower Apartments in Santa Monica by Jones & Emmons, to name a few landmark buildings. But when the Tarzana Ice Rink, for instance, went on to win a Los Angeles Chapter AIA Merit Award after it was built in 1960, jury member A. Quincy Jones told Bradshaw afterwards that the panel knew the rink’s design with its sweeping wide-span, thin-shell arched roof, was essentially his (since he’d pioneered the construction of such structures with Jones’ own King Cole Market design 10 years earlier), but the award had to be given to the architect of record.

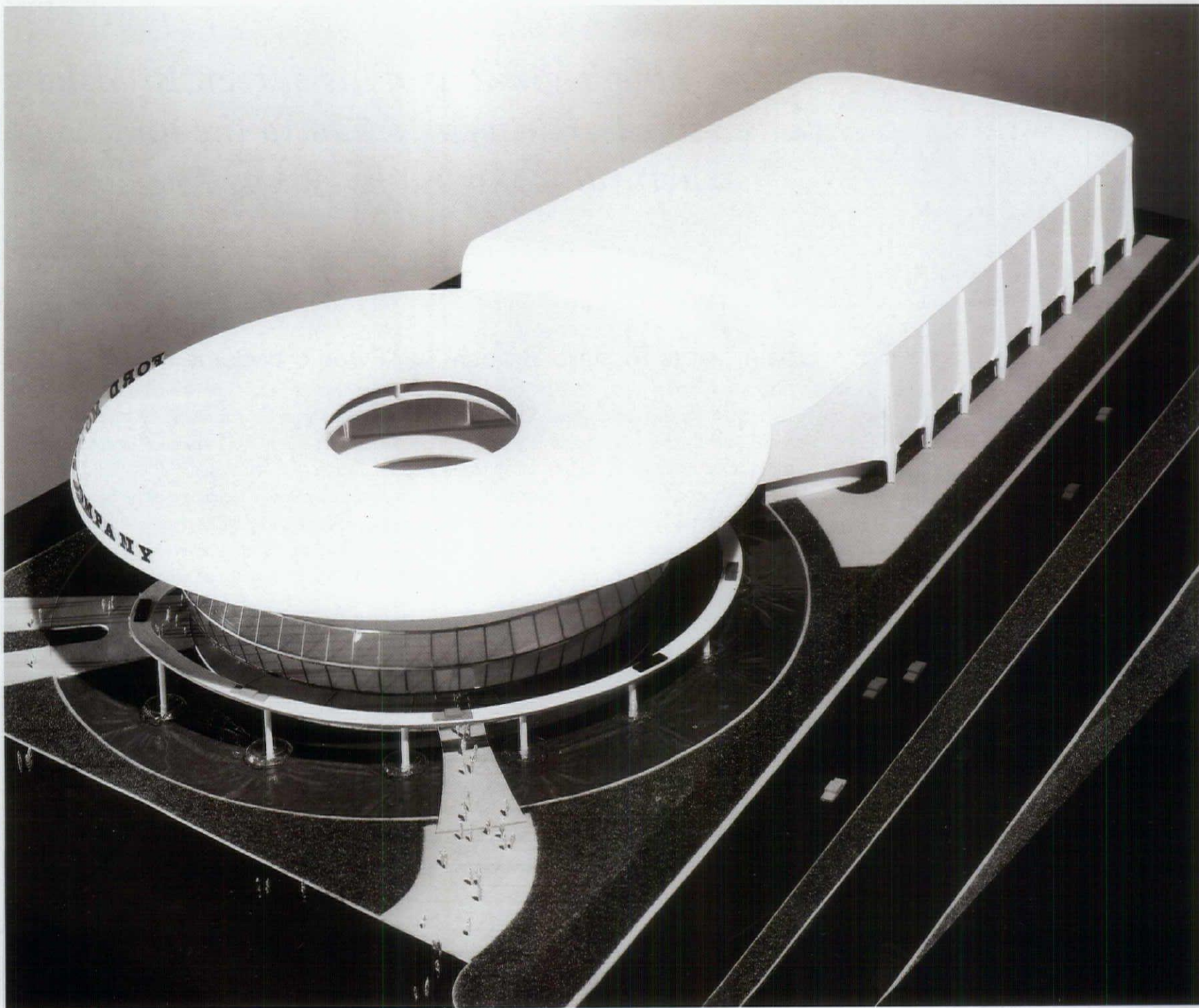
However, word got around in architectural circles that Bradshaw was the go-to person for structural designs that were outside the box—literally. From the beginning of his career, he enabled architects to add to the unique structural iconography of Los Angeles. In the late 1940s, he helped Douglas Honnold with the design of Tiny Naylor’s restaurant, which had an aerodynamic roof made of conventional steel beams (FIG1). He was A. Quincy Jones’ exclusive engineer for close to 20 years, calculating the structure for his non-residential buildings, including the University Research Library at UCLA, until a disagreement over the design of a condominium project in San Diego ended their professional alliance. But he remained the engineer of choice for Palmer & Krisel from the time they were working out of a garage with a dirt floor before ever becoming famous for the thousands of tract houses they designed throughout Southern California. For Ladd & Kelsey, Bradshaw calculated the structures for the popular Stuff Shirt restaurant in Newport Beach, built in 1961 featuring a modular design covered with thin concrete shells. And every film lover knows his United Methodist Church in La Verne, seen in the climactic scenes of Mike Nichols’ classic, *The Graduate*, where a folded concrete roof is featured.

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Then there was Robert Des Lauriers' Carlton Hills Lutheran Church in Santee, California near San Diego, completed in 1959, which demonstrates Bradshaw's command in calculating a complex hyperbolic paraboloid roof (FIG. 2). And he helped loyal client Welton Becket with Ford Motor Company's futuristic pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair (FIG. 3) as well as the Gulf Tower in Jacksonville, Florida, which was at one time the tallest precast post-tensioned concrete structure ever built.

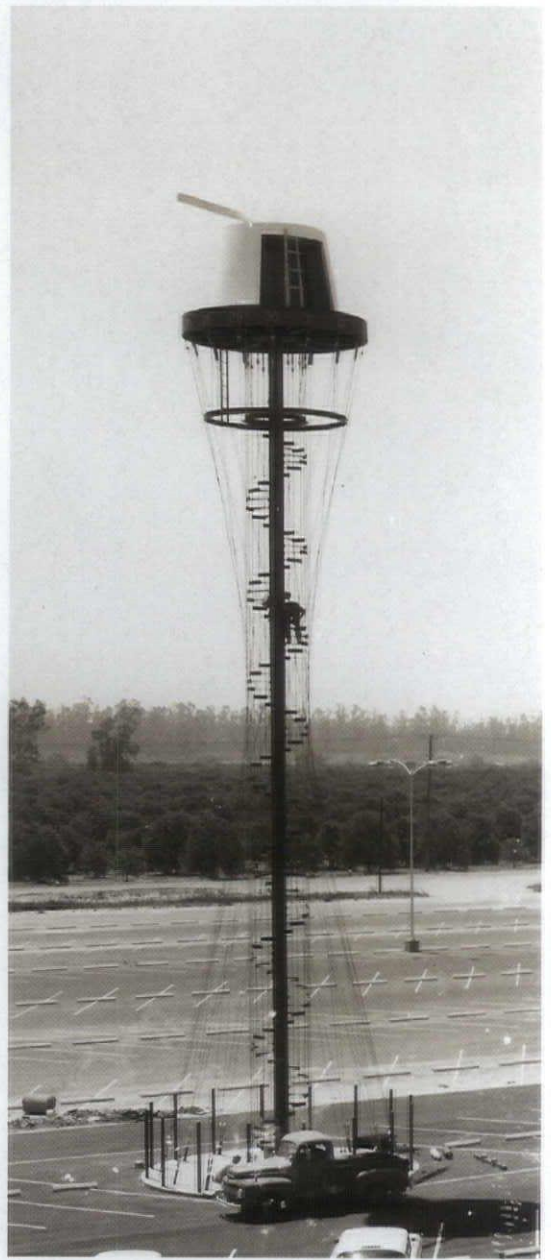
Despite his often-unsung status, Bradshaw was far more than a consultant to the architect. In several cases he played a decisive role in the final design. In his view, there are various levels of input the structural engineer has on the built outcome: From change in material, to change in shape, to complete conception of the structural design which determines the dominant image of the project. Occasionally his structural ideas constituted the actual architecture. The Radar Towers located in East L.A., formally ascribed to architect Kenneth Neptune, were actually conceived entirely by Bradshaw (FIG. 4). The same is true of the two-inch-thick hyperbolic

paraboloid roofs which add unique character to a luncheon pavilion for county employees for the City of Los Angeles (FIG. 5). Of his expertise on these unique geometries, he simply says, "My knowledge of engineering is accurate and complete to the point that I can predict their structural behavior."



From left, Joe Kinishita, Jim Santiago, Richard Bradshaw, Don Belding, Welton Becket, Paul Williams and Don Wilcox, ca. 1959.

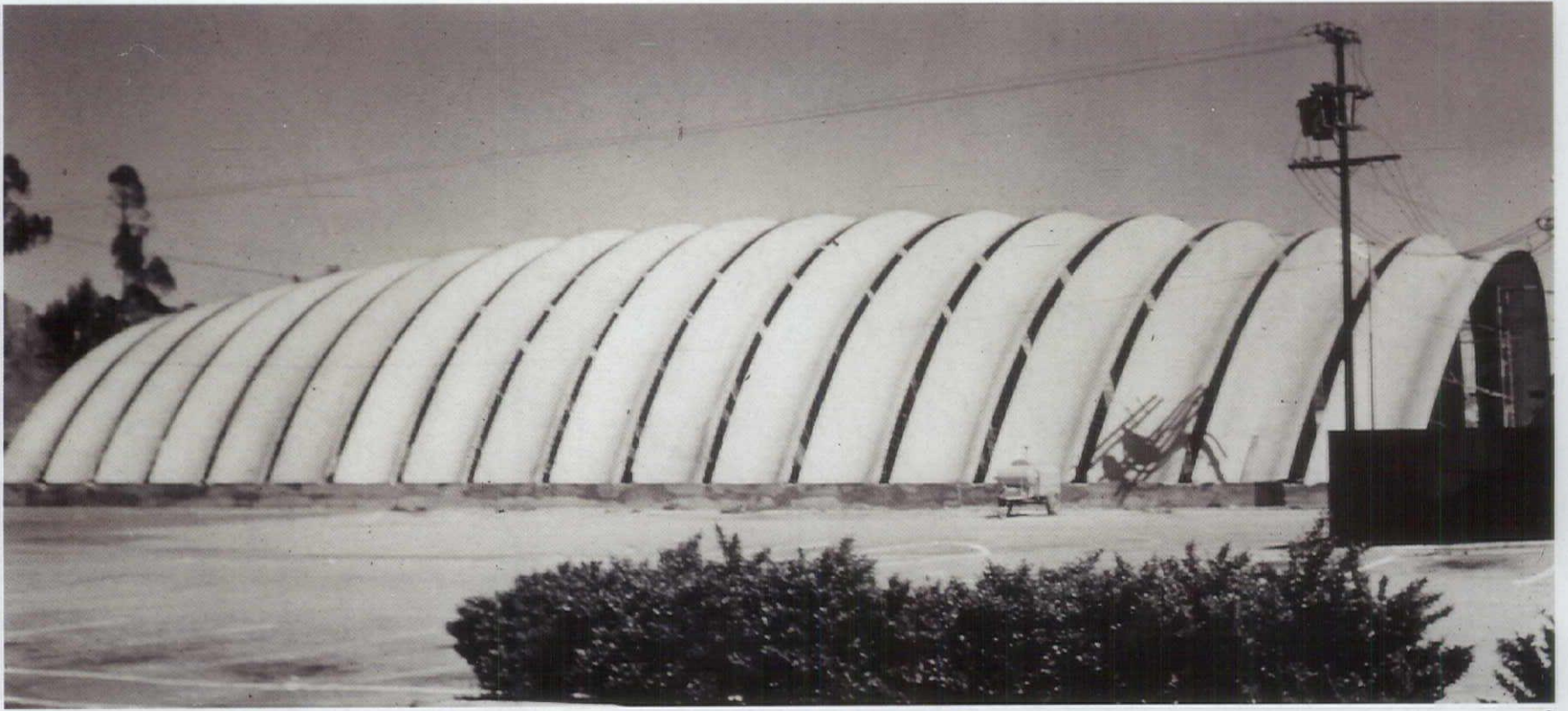
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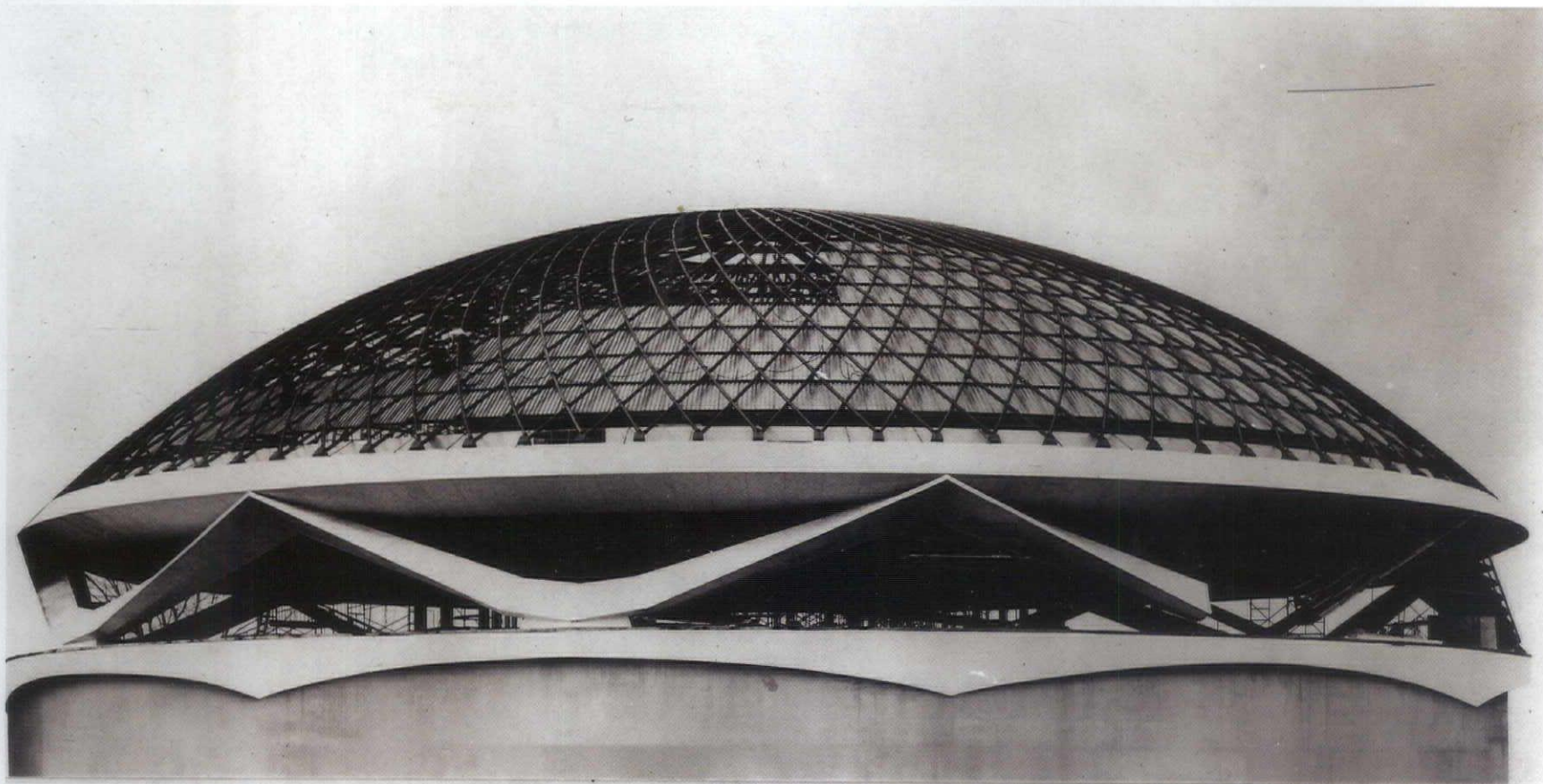
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It was his mastery of shell design, however, that gave Bradshaw a real edge over his colleagues. In order to support this odd passion, he admits he had to take on many more conservative jobs. "I did about 100 shells and I lost money on every single one of them. The concept and the understanding of them is time consuming." Of the flying saucer-like LAX Theme Building, he recalls, "That was all [William] Pereira's design. Initially it was going to be all shells. They presented it in city hall and it was rejected." In fact, one city official at the time turned particularly hostile to Bradshaw because his name was associated with projects that were consistently outside the comfort level of the building department. "He threatened to have my license revoked!"

But if that grand vision (initially created by James Langenheim of Pereira & Luckman and recently featured on the book cover of *Never Built Los Angeles* by Greg Goldin and Sam Lubell) had to be scrapped, a smaller yet equally iconic vision emerged in the revised LAX Theme Building which was finally built in 1961—the architectural team also included Paul Williams and Welton Becket, though Bradshaw's name is not often mentioned (he doesn't even have his own page on Wikipedia). Over time, the venerable engineer has learned to love this building despite his distaste for its false structural message: "The arches look like concrete, but they are steel, plastered. They had to be that way for code restrictions of what you could do with concrete arches."

In laboring over shells, Bradshaw fine-tuned his process for designing these singular forms: "The first thing you have to consider when you are dealing with a shell is that what you are working with is a fragment of an object—every curved surface is a fragment of a larger object and this larger object will either go to infinity or will close on itself. You [have to] understand the overall form that fragment comes from [to] get a picture of how it behaves. In the equations of the structural behavior of a shell, aeronautical engineers derive them for the entire object and when you cut that object, you have done a very profound thing to the original object and you can control it."

As Bradshaw's understanding grew deeper, more projects came along

and he was able to tackle these complicated forms in imaginative ways. The Tarzana Ice Rink, attributed to Carl Maston, was actually entirely Richard Bradshaw's design (FIG. 6 and 7). "The way it started out was that the Ice Rink was going to be a box made out of bricks," he says. "That was the sort of things that Carl Maston had done. The client became dissatisfied with Maston's proposal and wanted something different. He talked to Carl Maston. And Maston came to me and said 'Come up with something different.' And I realized that you do not need a rectangular plan [for a rink], you need an oval plan. And you do not need a level roof, you can really bring it down on the ends. [So] I started fooling around with this. And I thought about a shell form. And the shell form that occurred to me was that of a torus." The design came from understanding the geometry of the torus (a source of revolution traditionally found at the base of columns in classical architecture) and devising a method to precast the segment of the compound form on the parking lot for easy assembly with little explanation to the workers who were going to erect it.

For Welton Becket, Bradshaw designed a dome 200 feet in diameter for the General Electric Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair (FIG. 8), where the curvaceous structure floats on lyrical concrete supports forming a circular truss not dissimilar from what Myron Goldsmith of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill did for the Oakland Museum of California in the same years. In 1963, he was also the engineer of record for the McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas (FIG 9, 10, 11 and 12). Three identical shells 200 feet across all meet at the center and balance each other, forming one huge gigantic shell. Each curve is a double shell in concrete two feet deep made of an air gap sandwiched between two two-inch concrete layers. An egg crate with three-inch ribs laid eight feet apart in the center connects the two layers and gives rigidity. Engineering-wise, there was no bending curve, but a compressive shape acting as a funicular under dead load. The result was a slender structure whose exterior surfaces were smooth inside and out. The top dropped just 14 inches when it settled.

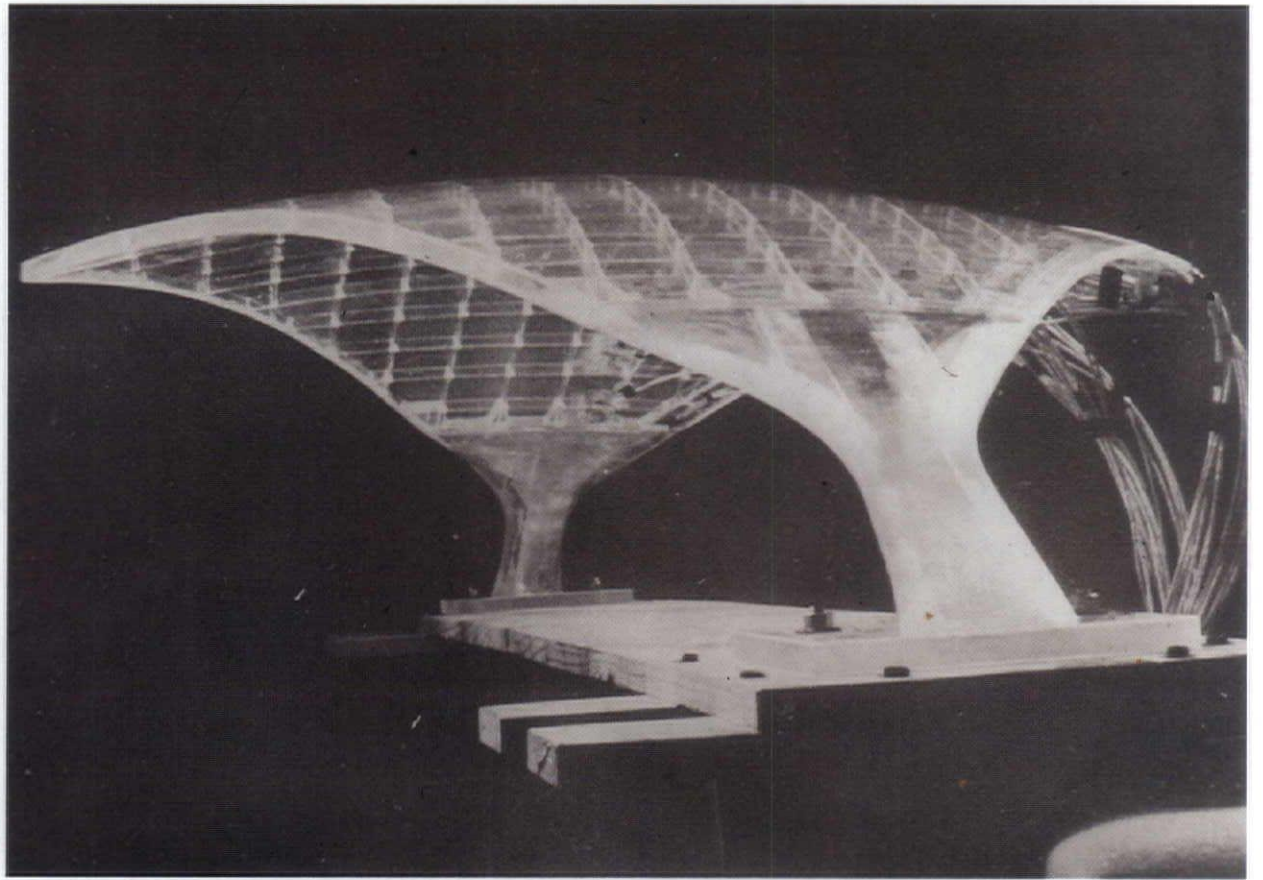


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Engineering-wise, there was no bending curve, but a compressive shape acting as a funicular under dead load.



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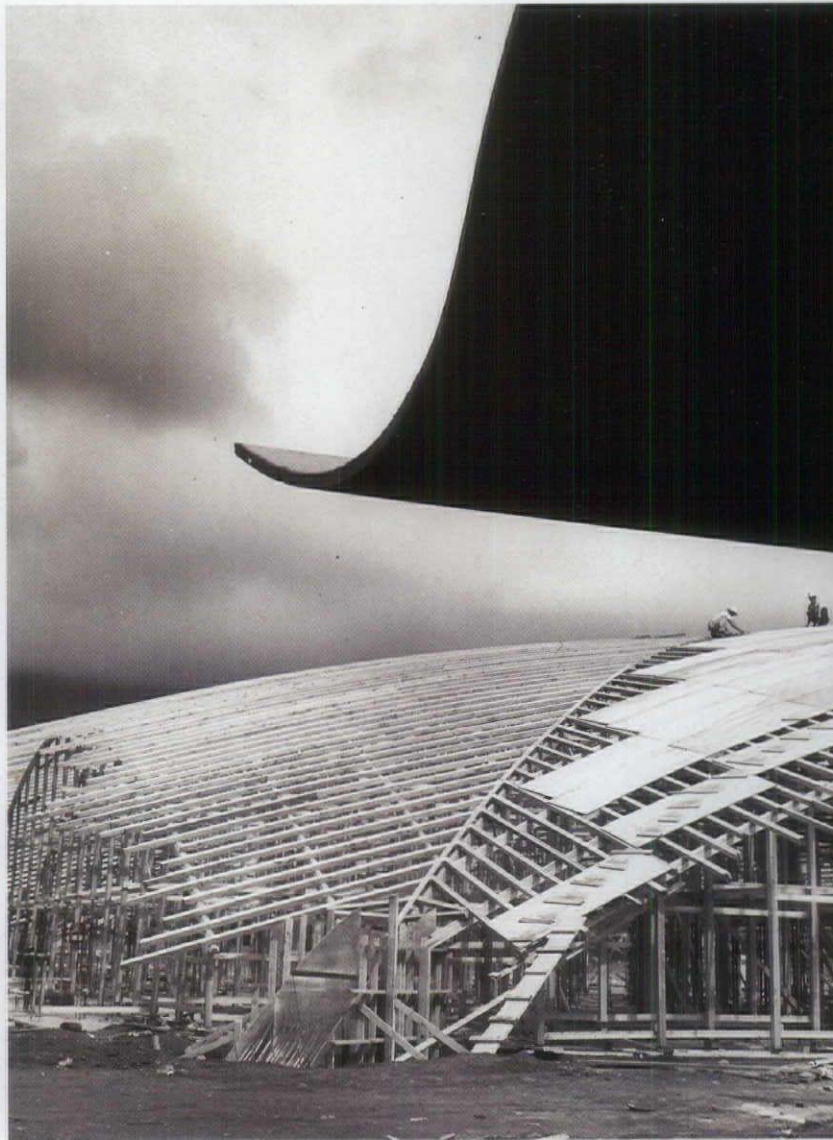


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It would seem that Bradshaw found his calling almost serendipitously. Born in Philadelphia in 1916, he moved around a lot with his family. His father, originally from England, was a U.S. Navy man who always wished he'd had a college education. As a result, he pushed his two sons to pursue their studies and, though his brother didn't follow suit, Richard earned a degree in structural engineering from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in 1939. During the subsequent war, Bradshaw says he "blundered into becoming an architectural engineer. The Navy had a big architectural engineering firm to do their buildings all over the Pacific. The 10th Naval District was the Pacific Ocean, so I went out there before the war. I was in Pearl Harbor when the [Japanese] attack came and I stayed there till the war was over. I was put in this architectural office, without having any idea about what architecture was, what it did. My whole background was just pure engineering. So my thoughts about engineering were that you become an aeronautical engineer, or you build dams or transmission towers. It was by sheer luck that I happened to get put into a general architectural office."

It was in this office that Bradshaw developed a crucial friendship with Pete Wimberly, founder of the renowned Honolulu-based architecture firm WATG, who would later become one of his most loyal clients (FIG. 13 and 14). "Of all the architects I have ever worked with, Pete had the best instinct for structures. He really had an insight on how the structure behaved, but he could not analyze anything himself."

Fond memories emerge when Bradshaw recollects a story about one structure he was to work on for Wimberly in Honolulu. It was a delicate, yet sturdy hyperbolic paraboloid in wood, composed of two layers of boards, with

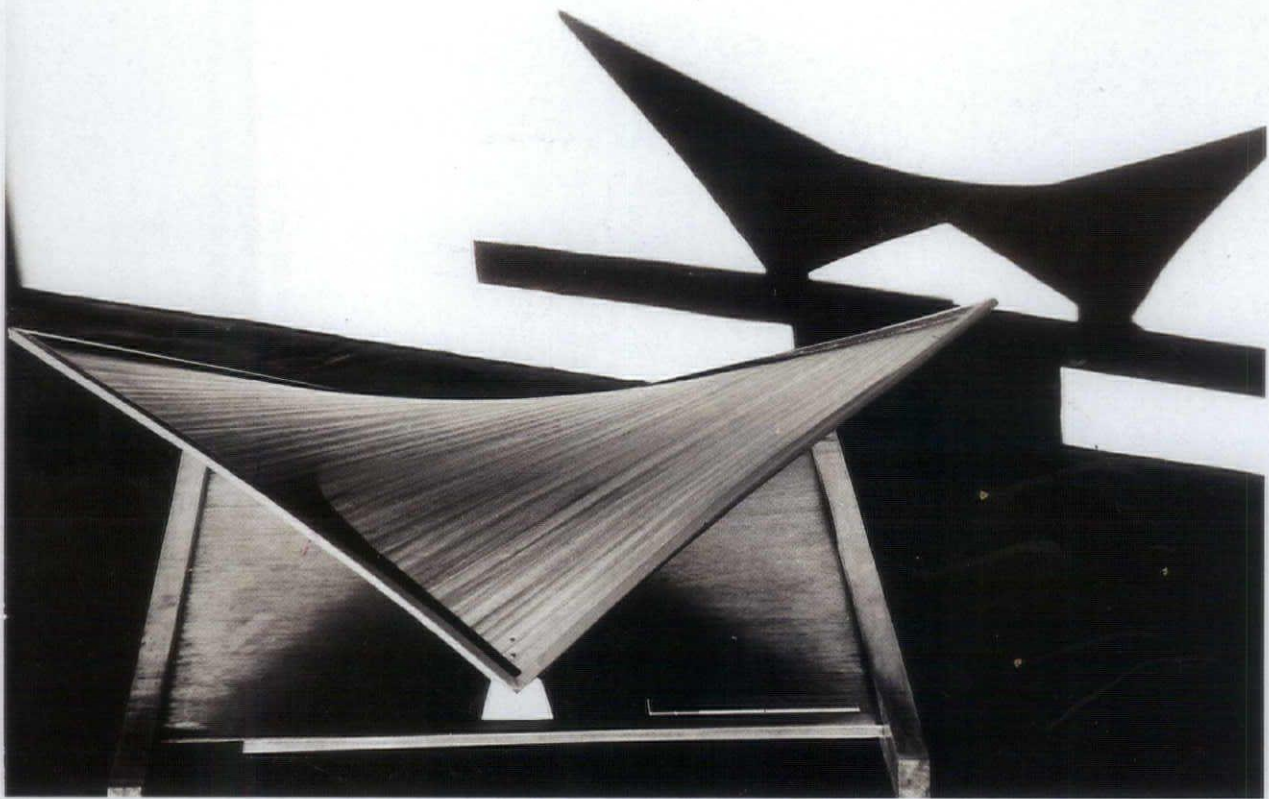


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no beams: just stressed skin (FIG. 15 and 16). The enclosure was held together with nails. Bradshaw recalls: "I always had curiosity about how nails work. Before the nails take any load, the two pieces of wood have to move a little, they have to slip slightly and overcome the friction between the two. So after this structure was built, Pete and I got up and stood at the umbilical point and we jumped up and down. It was just like a diving board. It would move about six inches or so as we jumped. And then we would hear small explosions: *Bruum!* And the shell would come down about an inch. Then we jumped some more and another: *Bruum!* The nails were taking up load as the boards were slipping slightly. The nails held it through friction, then the boards slipped and then the nails get crooked and finally take hold."

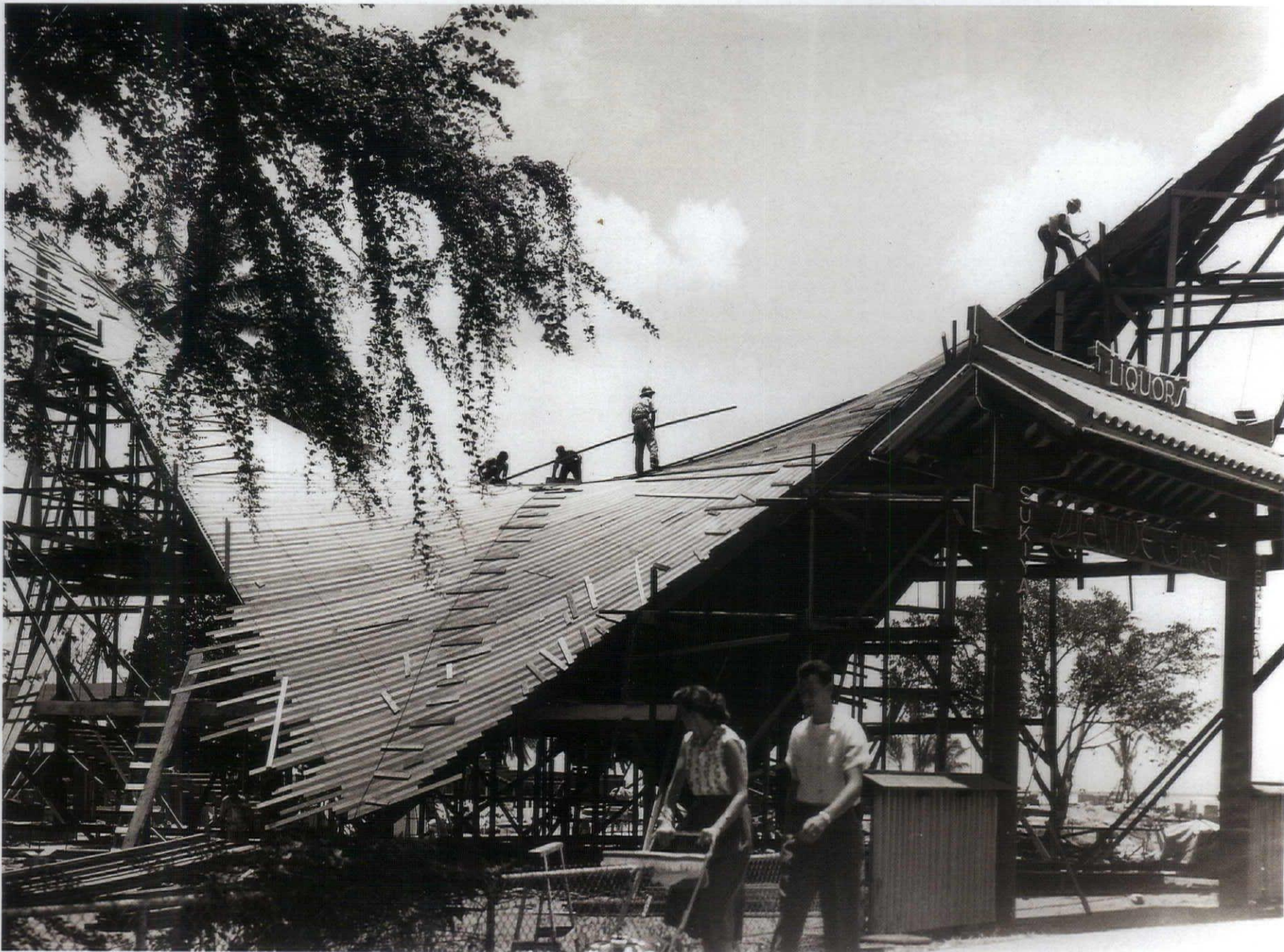
If his tenure in Hawaii shaped Bradshaw's mindset, it also left him feeling increasingly out of place as a mere engineer. By the time he re-entered civic life, he found that after 15 years of the Depression and war, an entire generation had been inadvertently precluded from practicing architecture and there were no precedents for new challenges. "Therefore we were free to invent things," he says. "There was this burst of energy to do all sorts of great things. And we did not have anybody to talk to!"

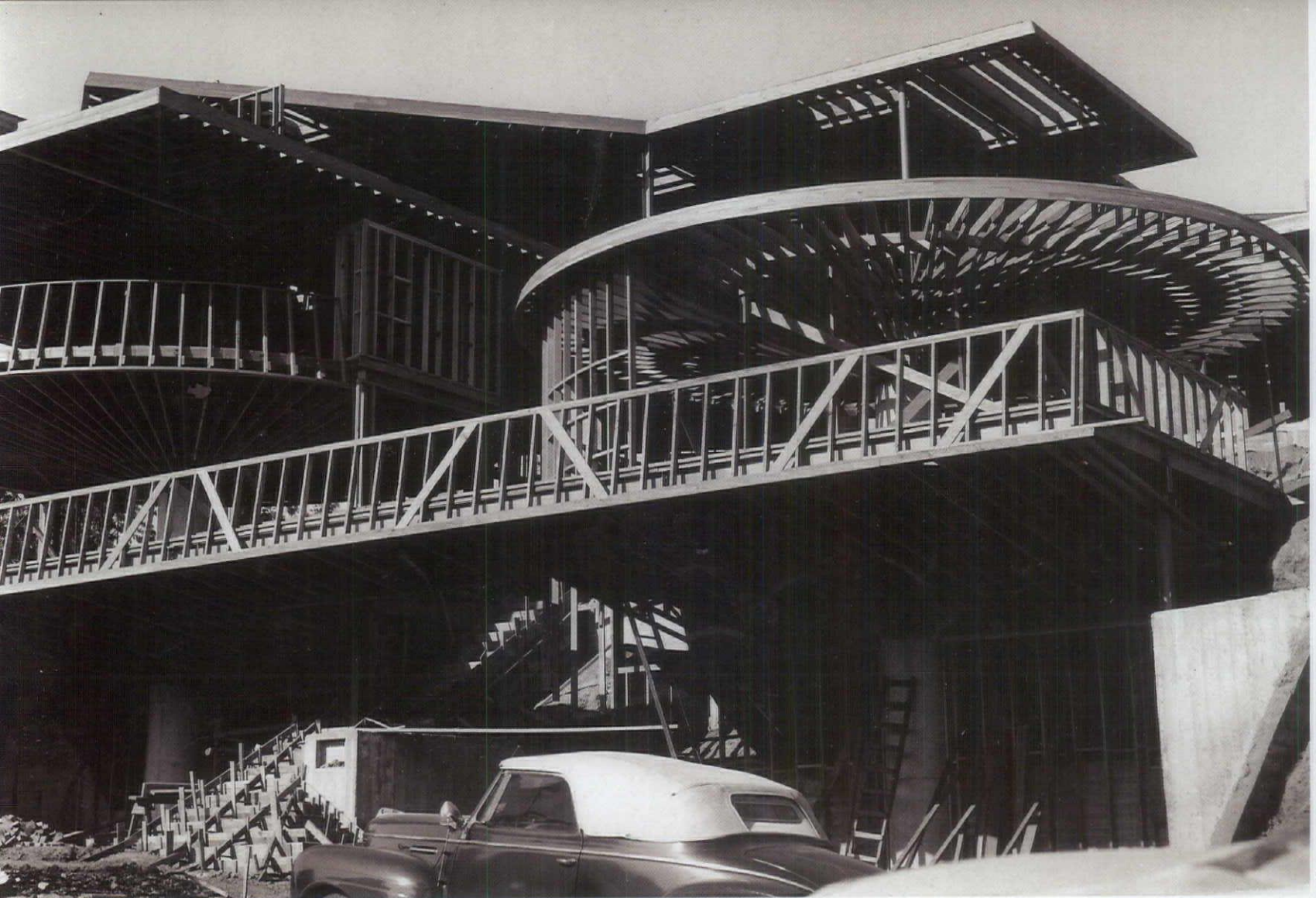
Despite his engineering degree, Bradshaw is, at heart, an architect. "Engineers are new-idea averse," he says. "I did like new ideas [so] I fit with the architects very well." And he especially related to designers who pushed the envelope of architectural norms—his collaboration with John Lautner, for example, lasted from 1947 till about 1960, during which he did the engineering for Google's, Coffee Dan's and the Bick House in Brentwood (FIG. 17), all of them long since demolished.



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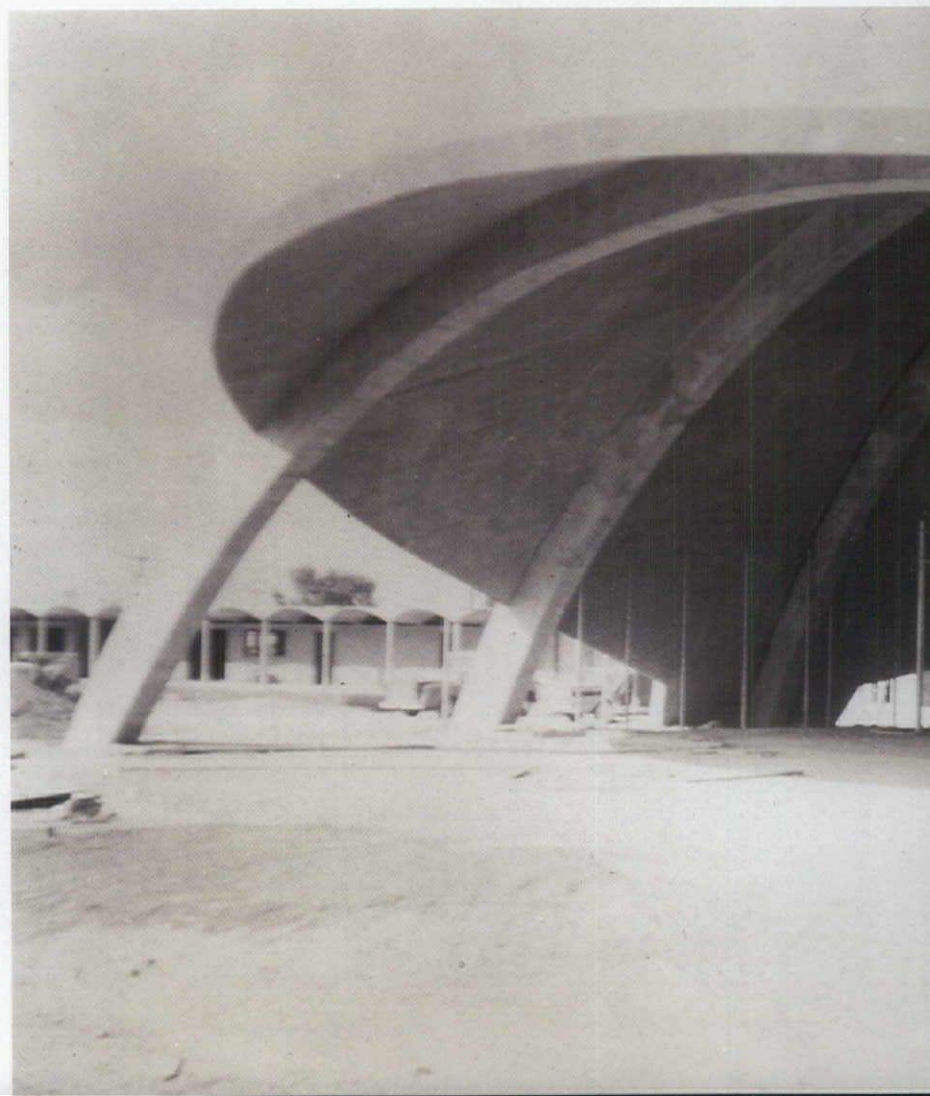


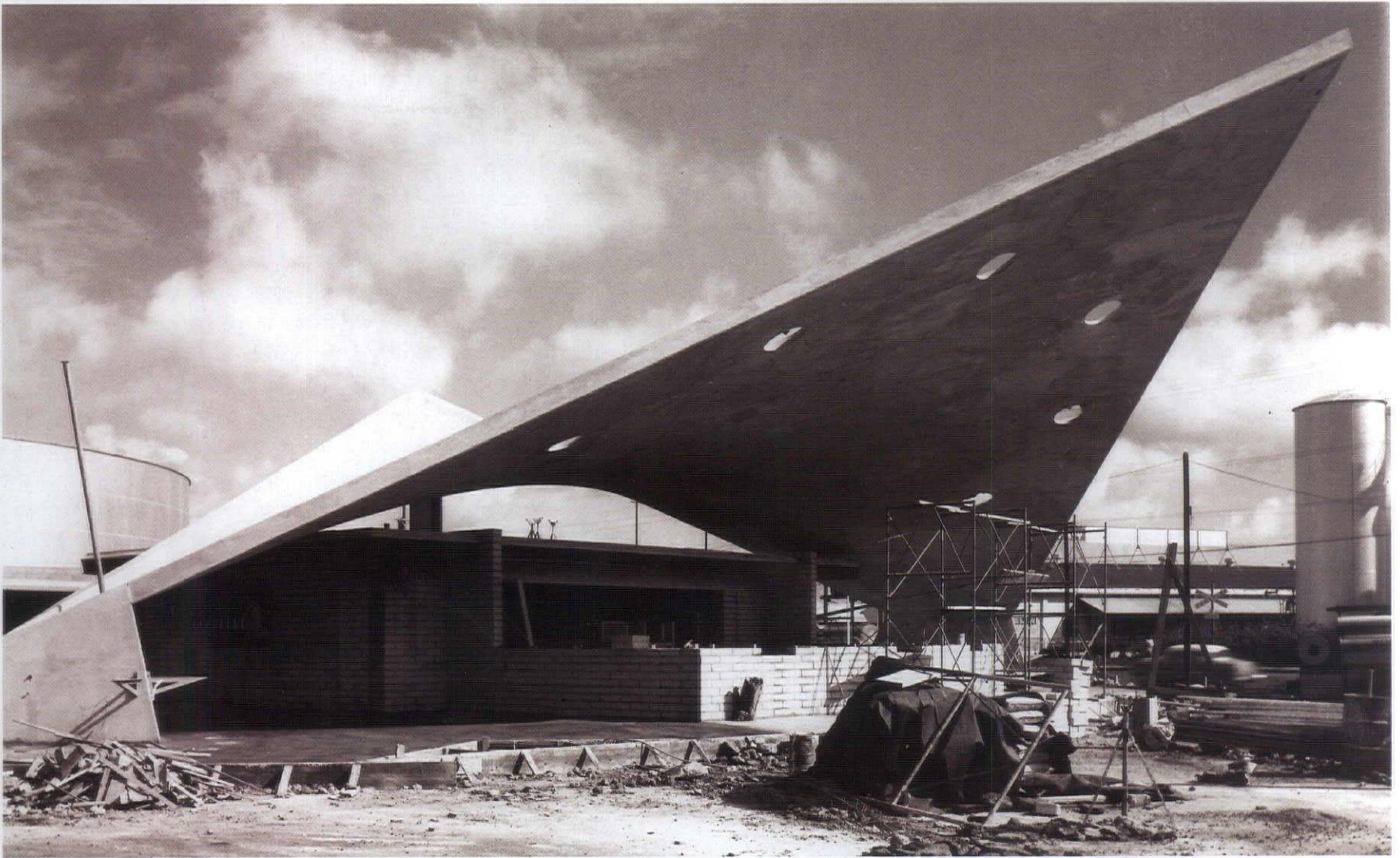


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It was after the war that Bradshaw made reinforced concrete his primary material in realizing his structures. Within the inventory of forms he explored, shells cast a unique spell on him (FIG. 18, 19 and 20). He became endlessly fascinated with them because of their potential to span large spaces through powerful sculptural shapes. That presented challenges since shells were at an experimental stage then and he realized that more technical knowledge was needed for him to control their static behavior under various load conditions. He remembers: "I undertook aerospace techniques and I became acquainted with some of the engineers of the aerospace industry, very brilliant guys. The top engineers did not go into architectural engineering, they went into aerospace. So I began learning from them. When it came to the design of shells, little or nothing was known at the time in the architecture field. Initially, I turned to the professors in the field of structural engineering. I paid them on the side to teach me about shell design. They would take me through the theoretical analysis, yet then they would stop short of a numerical answer. But in the aerospace industry you must get to a numerical answer, because you are putting people into machines. They had developed techniques to solve these equations that were totally unknown in other fields of engineering. So I learned these mathematical techniques. My turning to the study of the aerospace methods of solving things was what led me to the complicated shells. As far as I know, I am the only guy who learned that. It was laying right there in front of our eyes. Not a secret!"

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When asked about taking professional risks and the impact they could have on his liability insurance, Bradshaw simply states, "I couldn't stand not doing something different that interested me. I had to do it. Once I started getting new ideas, it was a compulsion that I had to go ahead and see them through to their completion. And that brought me into what became one of the driving forces of my life: I found out as I got into new fields of structure, because I was trying to do something new in architecture, that I did not have the technical knowledge to resolve some of these problems. And this drove me crazy. I had to learn it."

So he went back to school, attending University of Southern California for a Master of Science in Structural Engineering in 1959 and earning a similar degree in Applied Mechanics at California State University in 1992. "As I struggled with these problems—math was a lot of it, as well as higher more complex theories—it took me years to learn some of these techniques. They did not just come fast. I am referring to calculations, I was learning a lot of ways to calculate structures. These impressive fields of engineering to solve more difficult problems were typically solved by the aerospace industry, so I found myself more and more [involved with] that. Fortunately, at that time, Southern California was the aerospace industry [capital] of the world. We were building rockets to take a man to the moon. Talk about risk! I could see that these guys

were so far ahead of the architectural engineers, that it wasn't even close!"

At his productive peak, Bradshaw oversaw an engineering firm with five offices and more than 40 employees; while his main headquarters were in Los Angeles, he opened branches in Honolulu, San Francisco, Portland, Oregon, and Orlando, Florida where he received numerous commissions from Disney. But he never got used to the demands of an increasing volume of work and personnel to manage. "I hated running an office," he says. His biggest concern, and frustration, was that such success interfered with his freedom to focus on the work he loved most—the actual structural design of his projects. "I detested a common attitude about engineers—which was that after they had been running an office for awhile and their practice had grown, they thought that they had really arrived, becoming the engineer-executive without doing the engineering, dealing with taxes...I had no interest in that whatsoever!"

While his list of projects is long and impressive, perhaps Bradshaw's greatest achievement was his ability to infuse in each of them an enthusiasm for a technology rich in architectural expression that was largely anticipatory of the free forms we are experiencing today through an unleashed computing power. But with one marked difference: His structures were as functional as they were emotionally exciting, two layers always present in the ongoing project of modern architecture, in and out of California. **015**



Bradshaw revisits the now-landmark LAX Theme Building

PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN CENTER

E. Stewart Williams, FAIA, *Santa Fe Federal Savings and Loan*, photograph by Julius Shulman, 1961 © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute

An incubator for architecture and design is growing in Palm Springs. Housed in the former E. Stewart Williams designed Santa Fe Savings & Loan, the A+D Center, with the Trina Turk Gallery exhibition space, Lorraine Boccardo Archive Study Center, and Bradford W. Bates Vault: The Museum Design Store, is now Southern California's hub for the study of architecture and design.

Support art, architecture, and design by becoming a member of Palm Springs Art Museum and the Architecture and Design Council. For information about membership and becoming a **FRIEND OF THE A+D CENTER** contact Michael Hinkle at 760-322-4897 or mhinkle@psmuseum.org. Make sure to put the A+D Center on your list of things to do whenever you visit Palm Springs.

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On the Grid: a look at settlement patterns in the high desert



Andrea Zittel, *Lay of My Land #1*, 2011, steel, Hydrocal, burlap, sand, stone and latex paint. Image courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles.



PLETSCH *IN* PASADENA



The most prolific Southern California architect you've never heard of, Theodore Pletsch mixed Beaux Arts with modernism, bringing a new interpretation of elegance to the City of Roses.

Written by **Barbara Lamprecht** Photographs by **Cameron Carothers**



“I have lived with over 500 women—because I have [designed] over 500 houses,” Theodore Pletsch told an interviewer in 1985 while recording his oral history. “I have learned how to dig a house out of a woman’s mind. Matter of fact, I sit down on a slope board and I draw it in front of them. We just talk and I draw. Sometimes they help me draw.”

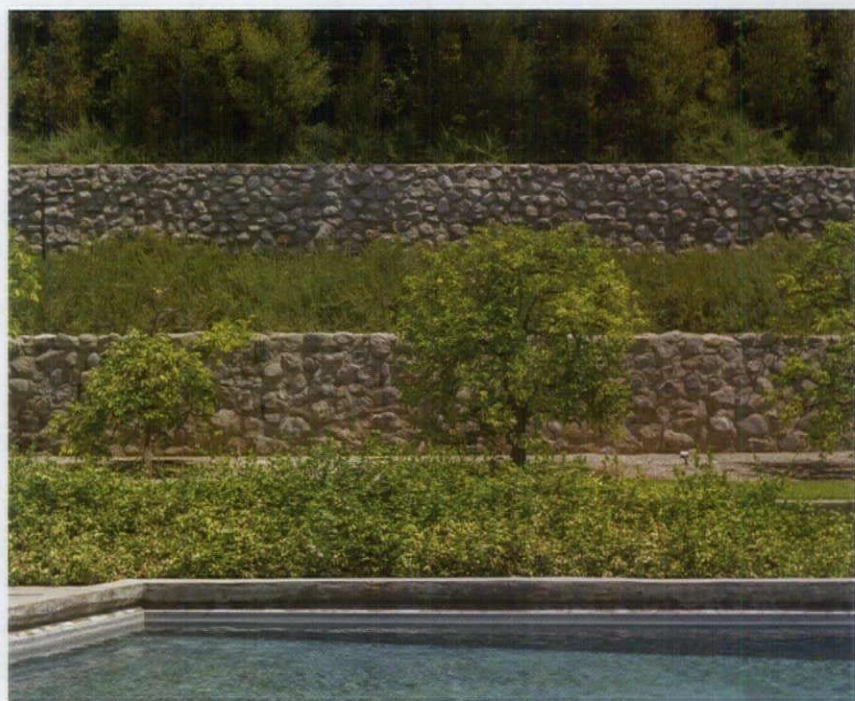
Nowhere is his claim more evident than in the home he designed for decorator and mid-century interiors retailer Jean Crowell and her husband, Eugene. Ringed by tall coast live oaks, the property lies in the crook of an old wooded Pasadena street that follows the steep slope that rises from the lower arroyo. Large imposing gates are set into a stately concrete wall covered with creeping

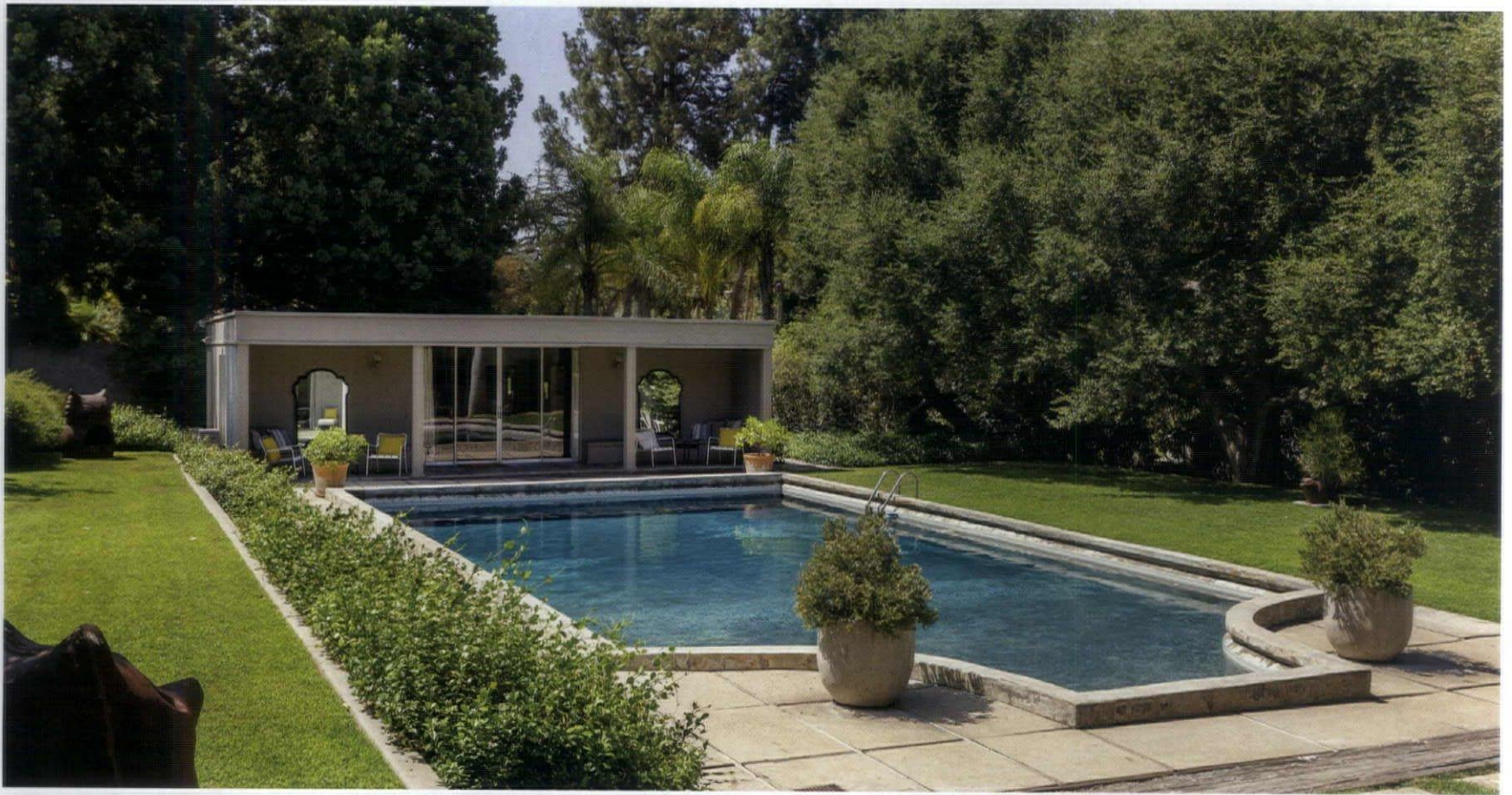
fig vines. They open to a courtyard and two-story building with a virtually opaque façade. Its smooth, gray-green stucco walls are punctured by a few small windows with ornate metal grilles, as though it were a medieval fortress reinvented for modern times.

Built in 1967, the house itself continues the dialogue between past and present, not following the dictates of either the 15th or the 20th century but rather employing each as desired. And it reflects what, by all accounts, was a deep collaboration between architect Pletsch and decorator Cromwell. “I

don’t think either of them had done work like this before or since. It was a strange moment in time—post-case study house, pre-post modernism,” notes its recent owner, architect Tom Marble.

Like most good canonical modernist residences, the three-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath house is closed to the street while the rear opens to the garden. Rosemary, *Acacia redolens*, white licorice, and creeping olive spill over the terraced arroyo stone retaining walls stepping up the steep hill, bordered by a row of gnarled Oroblanco grapefruit trees below. *Dodonea viscosa* shrubs add a ribbon of red that threads through the hillside. All these bands of stone and varied shades of green lie parallel to the heart of the composition: A long, rectangular swimming pool glinting with dark teal waters. Edged with a prominent concrete curb incised with two flamboyant curves, the pool offers the entire setting an aristocratic cool with a nod to the Baroque.



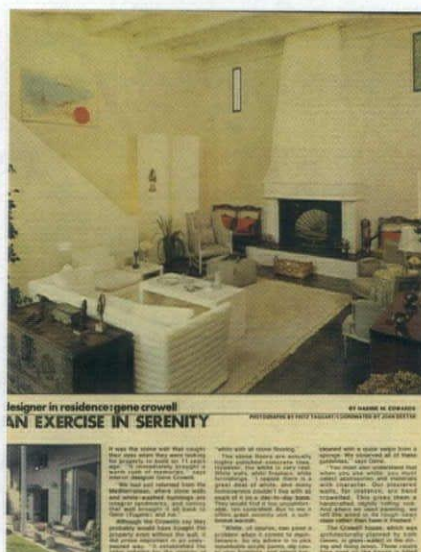
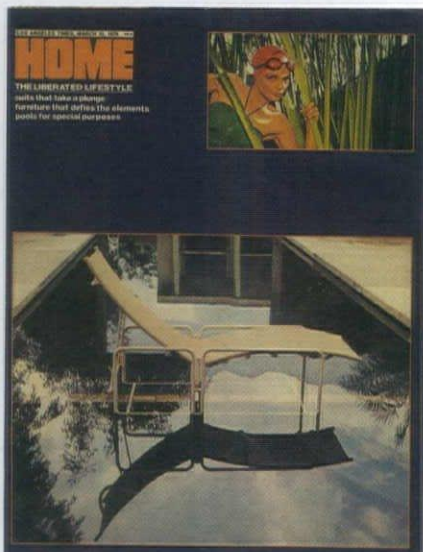


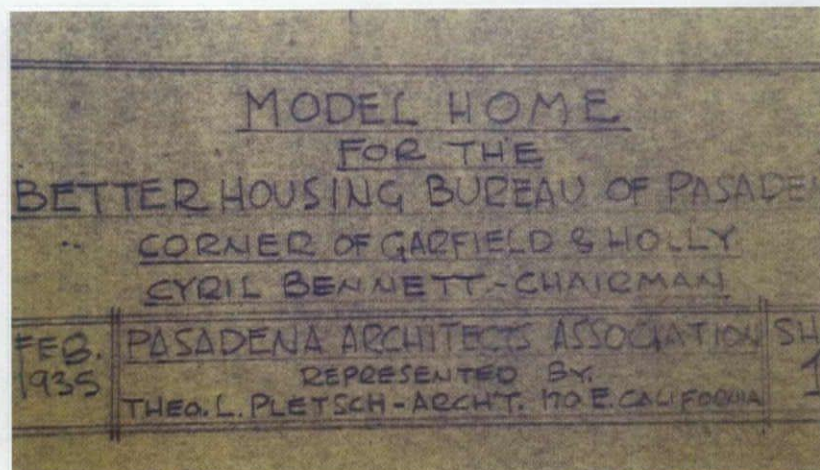
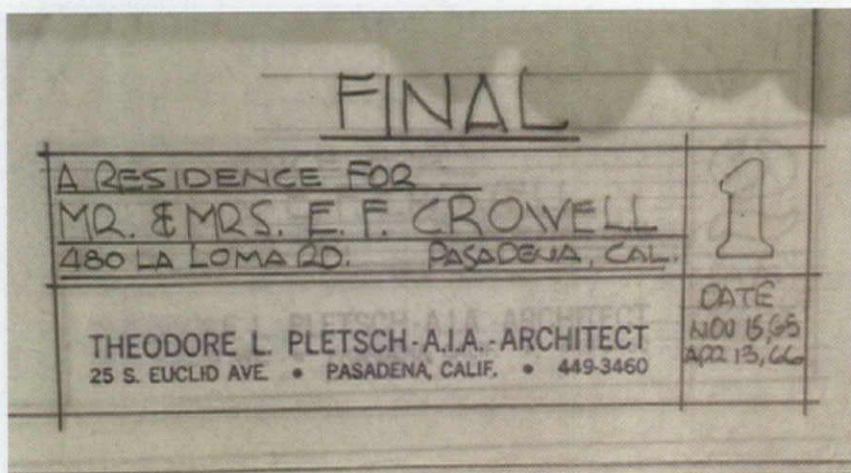
While the design of the house makes a similar strong gesture with its long horizontal roofline, the way the house meets the ground is an altogether different game in its studied, yet athletic response to the sloping site. Each major space of the house—an eastward flow of living room, dining room, kitchen, master bedroom—has its own level and a generous custom sliding-glass unit leading to a sheltered terrace. Reinforcing the façade's horizontality, Pletsch and Crowell maintained the same header height throughout, though the glass sections change in size according to their relationship to the hill as it rises. Thus, the living room—fittingly, the most public space—is accorded the tallest window, while a short, broad run of steps links all the terraces.

The house and a sleek pavilion-style guest house with a row of squared columns flank the pool. The pavilion's design recalls the work of austere formalist Mies van der Rohe. In theory, the contrast between the elegant pool and the sleek pavilion should make for an uncomfortable relationship. But just as Mies used a curvaceous classically-inspired statue, Georg Kolbe's *Alba*, to set off his famed Barcelona Pavilion, Pletsch creates a contrast here that works because

of the strongly layered, linear arrays of landscaping that provide a deep sense of order to the site.

On the garden elevation, the columns differ from those of the casita. Here they are slender, round, double-height and constructed of poured concrete, but with one astonishing twist: Instead of embellishing columns with, perhaps, a stripped-down version of the Ionic Order in keeping with the pool's vocabulary, these bear the spiraling marks left by the stiff cardboard tubes (often referred to by the brand name Sonatube) that hold the liquid concrete while it dries. This honest industrial detail, beloved by the Arts and Crafts movement and early modernists, percolates throughout the interior—e.g., the white-painted rough wooden planking and exposed ceiling beams in certain rooms. However, this rawness is nicely tempered by pairs of beautiful antique wood doors, reminders of Crowell's life abroad. Likewise, she opted for hand-troweled plaster walls to recall the textures of Mediterranean villages and chose a color palette that ranges from warm whites to moss green, whether in the polished concrete tiles or the gray greens of the exterior.





In 1965, the Crowells bought the parcel which was subdivided from the grounds of a rambling English Tudor built in 1925, one of the grand estates on Pasadena's "Millionaire's Row" along South Orange Grove Boulevard. Luckily for them, their acreage included precious parts of the estate's history: The ornamental pool (repurposed for swimming by Jean), the towering trees, a small orchard, the stone retaining walls.

Shortly after the purchase, while researching the original estate's provenance, a mystery emerged. Though the house was acknowledged by reputable sources as the work of Cyril Bennett and his partner Fitch Haskell, the name of the architect listed on the estate's 1925 permit belongs to Marston, Van Pelt, & Maybury, an equally illustrious early 20th-century architectural firm. Located on a flag lot and only accessed by a long driveway, the mansion and its owner, retired industrialist Charles G. Lathrop, remained discreetly removed from the society life swirling along the row. So perhaps it is not surprising that the identities of the architects and that accomplished garden designer have become obscured, at least for now.

What was a surprise was learning that Pletsch had worked for both firms in the 1920s, spending only a few weeks with Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury (at six dollars per week). These were followed by short stints with other architectural luminaries: Wallace Neff in 1927, then Myron Hunt and finally Paul Williams in 1929. Yet, despite working for such a pantheon of 20th-century starchitects and being credited with over 1,300 completed buildings permitted in over 100 cities, Pletsch is probably the most successful architect no one has ever heard of. He also seems to have been one of the happiest of men. "My three hobbies are designing, environments and human beings," he once said. And though he eventually died in 1994 at the age of 92, Pletsch attributed his good health, stamina, and longevity to much-cherished 10-mile weekend hikes in the San Gabriel Mountains.

(Page 3 of 75 - This print header can be changed using the printHeader HTML tag - see the viewONE HTML manual for further information)

All Applications Must Be Filled Out by Applicant
(USE INDELEBIL PENCIL)

2 APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF FRAME BUILDING

CLASS "D" ZONE 6

Application is hereby made for a permit to construct the building hereafter described at the point hereinafter specified.

(SIGN HERE) John H. Simpson Applicant

Lot No. 10-11-12 Block AND S. G. B. Co. (Applicant)

691 S. Orange Grove Ave Map No. 130 STREET AVENUE

- PURPOSE OF BUILDING Residence Number of Rooms 13
- OWNER'S NAME C. G. Lathrop
- Owner's Address 370 Congress St.
- Architect's Name Marston Van Pelt & Maybury
- CONTRACTOR'S NAME John H. Simpson
- Contractor's Address 545 S. Raymond Ave.
- ENTIRE COST OF PROPOSED BUILDING, \$ 46,191.00
- Size of Lot 217'6" x 246'1" Size of Building 106' x 77'
- Will Building be erected on front or rear of lot? Rear
- NUMBER OF STORIES IN HEIGHT 2 Height to highest point of roof 42'
- Of what material will FOUNDATION and cellar walls be built? Concrete
- GIVE depth of FOUNDATION below surface of ground 20"
- Give dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar wall FOOTINGS 1'0" x 1'0" 1'4" x 1'4"
- GIVE width of FOUNDATION and cellar wall at top 6" 8" + 10"
- NUMBER and KIND of chimneys 1 Number of flues 3
- Number of inlets to each flue 1 Interior size of flues 1' x 1'4"
- Give sizes of following materials: MUDSILLS 2 x 6 Girders and stringers 6 x 6
- EXTERIOR STUDS 2 x 10 BEARING STUDS 2 x 6 Interior Studs 2 x 4
- Ceiling joist 2 x 6 Roof rafters 2 x 6 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS 2 x 8
- SECOND FLOOR JOIST 2 x 10 Third floor joist x Fourth floor joist x
- Specify material of roofing Tile Material for floors Wood + Tile

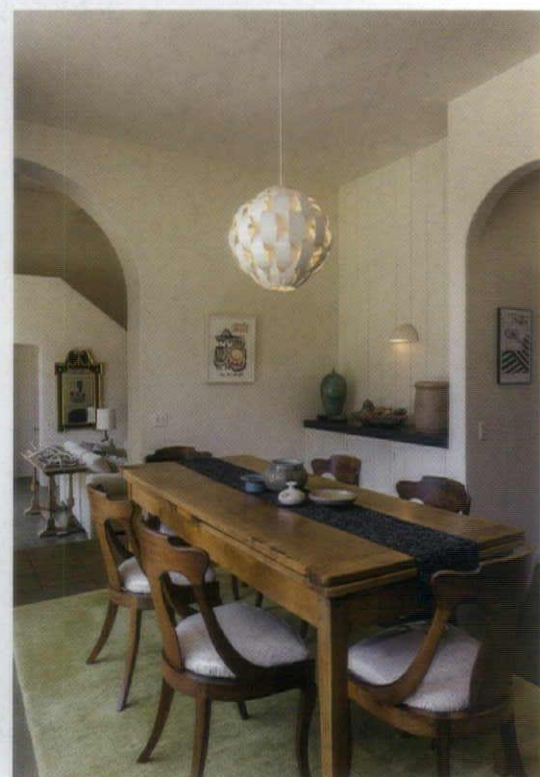
THE FIGURES ON THIS CHART SHOW YOUR SET BACK LINES.

In Zones C, D and E, or Third, Second and First Residence Districts, respectively, no buildings or structures other than fences not exceeding eight (8) feet in height, shall be constructed nearer than four (4) feet to the side line of any lot within one hundred (100) feet of the street to which such side line runs. As used herein, the term "side line" shall mean all boundaries of any lot except the street frontage thereof and the rear line thereof. In the case of lots, the rear line of which abut on the side lines of any other lot, such rear line shall also be considered a side line for the purpose of this section.

"No building or portion thereof or other structure above the mean ground level of the lot upon which it is erected shall be built nearer to the street line of the street on which the lot abuts than the distance from such street to the building line hereby established for the lot on which it stands in the zone or district in permitted; provided, however, that fences not exceeding three feet in height shall not be deemed a violation hereof. Building lines are hereby established as follows:
The setback line includes porches, steps, cornice or any part of the building above the mean ground level.

There must be a clear air space of at least twelve inches under the first floor joist of all buildings.
(State Housing Law of California.)

PERMIT NO. 7529 Date issued DEC 1935



Born in Iowa in 1901, Pletsch had moved with his family to Southern California in 1909 and graduated from Pasadena High School in 1920. Accepted into Caltech (when tuition was 200 dollars), intending to become a chemist, Pletsch lost interest during his freshman year and later claimed to have "pounded nails and mixed concrete" with his grandfather instead. At the University of Southern California, he studied architecture when the

school still followed the Beaux Arts principles taught throughout the country and before it gained its eventual reputation for modernism. (Founded in 1916, the department became accredited in 1925, just as Pletsch graduated. Pletsch's architectural license number is C-27: he gleefully noted that Welton Becket, architect of many L.A. landmarks, such as the Capitol Records building in Hollywood, was C-26. According to the California Architects Board, today's

licenses exceed 21,000.)

Curiously, throughout his career he seems to have cheerfully ignored both the Beaux Arts and modern tenets of symmetry, as evidenced by the Crowell House. The client's wishes were what counted. As he once said, "I only design what the customer wants. I'm no Frank Lloyd Wright—never wanted to be..." So he couldn't tolerate the later mid-century work coming out of the program. "These young kids at SC," he once said, "they want to do their own thing, not the client scheme."

As fate would have it, Pletsch opened his own office in 1929—hardly an auspicious year to start a business, let alone a solo architectural practice. But despite the Great Depression, by 1933, he had two houses under construction in San Marino "when good carpenters earned three dollars a day and you could buy an acre [in San Marino] for \$3,000." He would go on to design about 300 homes in this patrician community, no doubt adding to its renown.





The neutral color scheme of the living room is punctuated by (left to right): *Dammed Everything but the Circus* (1960), silkscreens, by Sister Corita Kent; *Mosaic*, wood-framed glass panels by Millard Sheets and Octavio Medellin; *Study for Colored Crinkle* (2014), cotton and polyester, by Pae White; and a Scandinavian modern Etcetera lounge chair designed in 1970 by Jan Ekselius.



Model House News

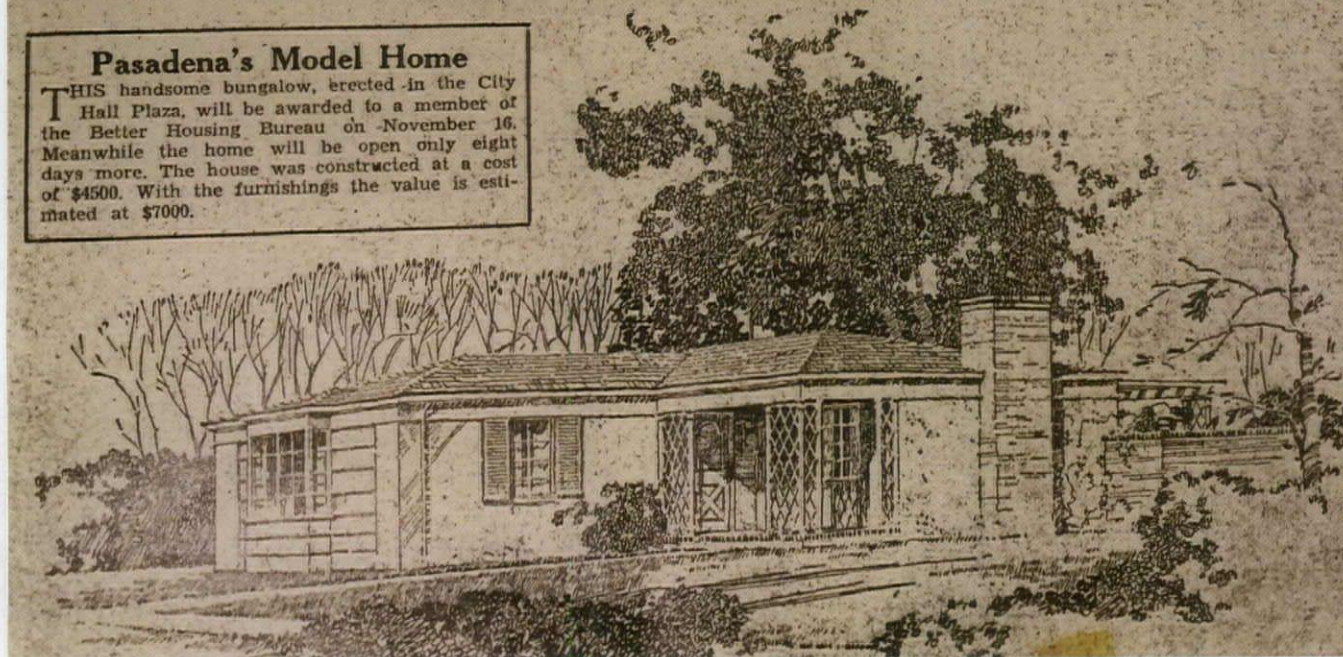
Published by The
PASADENA BETTER HOUSING PROGRAM COMMITTEE



Housing Bureau Membership To End On Saturday Night, November 16, At Public Civic Auditorium Meeting

Pasadena's Model Home

THIS handsome bungalow, erected in the City Hall Plaza, will be awarded to a member of the Better Housing Bureau on November 16. Meanwhile the home will be open only eight days more. The house was constructed at a cost of \$4500. With the furnishings the value is estimated at \$7000.



NEW OWNER TO RECEIVE MODEL HOME

Contest To Be Closed
Tomorrow Evening;
Many Prizes

The award of the Model House, which will be definitely closed at 8 o'clock Saturday night, November 16, will be made at a public meeting at the Civic Auditorium simultaneously opening at the same hour.

The owner will be granted a period of 30 days for its removal to a location he or she desires. An offer of \$3000 has been made to the Better Housing Bureau by a local

PASADENA POST, FRIDAY MO

Perhaps it's not such a coincidence that Pletsch worked as a Hollywood set designer right after World War II. His houses are skillfully proportioned and might have inspired the comfortable style seen in the 1948 Cary Grant classic, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*. His many commissions often included the garden designs, so Pletsch was able to work with noted landscape architects such as the influential Florence Yoch (1890-1972.) He also worked with another famed landscape architect, Ruth Shellhorn (1909-2006), known for her brilliant work at Disneyland and her polished landscapes for the ultra-sleek Bullock's department stores beginning with the 1945 Pasadena store, also designed by Becket.

In 1945, Pletsch witnessed the construction of that now-iconic example of modern suburban retail architecture, just as he had watched the building of Pasadena's City Hall in 1927—part of the civic center designed by his future employer, Bennett and Haskell. Of his tenure with that firm, Pletsch said he designed "30 or 40 facades for commercial buildings before Colorado Boulevard was widened." Bennett himself awarded Pletsch the top prize for his re-conception of a "small house" in 1935 during the peak of the Depression. Sponsored by the Pasadena Housing Bureau, the model home was actually constructed in front of City Hall on one of the two small parks to the west.

PASADENA'S BETTER HOUSING PROGRAM

THE Pasadena Better Housing Bureau, organized for the local co-operation with the Better Housing Program of the Federal Housing Administration. The Pasadena Bureau was created by appointment of an Executive Committee in the Pasadena Chapter of Commerce at the request of the Federal Administration. This committee is composed of: Cyril Bennett, Chairman; E. A. Lockert, Stanley Van Dyke, L. H. George, S. Campbell, George W. Thompson, Harry G. Land, Lathrop K. Lindquist, William A. Alworth, Robert Alworth and William Dooker, Secretary.

The first activity of the committee was to make a survey of the City of Pasadena to determine what repairs, alterations and new houses might be required. This survey was taken as an SREPA project and upon its completion, the Bureau was formed and an office established at 41 North Garfield Avenue, space kindly loaned by Postmaster Harold B. Ryan. The survey developed a large number of projects for construction in all of the building construction industries. These have been turned over to them as rapidly as possible.

In order to further stimulate interest in building construction, an Exhibit of Building Materials was established in the corner quarters and thirty-four exhibitors are now showing their products in one of the best organized and most attractive exhibits Pasadena has ever seen. This is open daily to the public from ten to four o'clock. At the same time, construction was begun on a Model Green House, situated in the Baldwin. In this project, the committee has had the full co-operation of the Pasadena banks, material dealers, contractors and sub-contractors.

The House is truly representative of a community spirit guided to the interests of better business and employment. Already it has stimulated great interest on the part of our citizens. The first two days, over 1,100 people visited the Exhibit. In the Exhibit will be found a room devoted to drawings and sketches of various types of modern homes. This is the contribution of the Pasadena architects, all of whom have shown a willingness to respond and contribute to the general program.

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After the House has served its purpose over a period of a few months and is no longer needed for advertising purposes, it will be given to one of the subscribers to the Better Housing Bureau Fund.

The variety of materials and equipment exhibited in the Building Exhibit is evidenced by the following list of exhibitors and products shown: Plaid S. Lee, showing brick, blue lining, terra cotta and "Hercules"; L. H. Riggs,

Furniture Co., fine painted room furniture in Early American, Crown City Mfg. Co., California Pasadena Pine cabinets in vertical boarding, millwork, built-in fixtures and California tile, Berkeley Tile Co., Berkeley Tiles, a fine day product, Patina Glass, Bathroom tiles, Vacuumed quarry floors, hand-made Rustic floors, George L. Thompson Co., displaying Anti-Hydro Water Proofing for basements, fish ponds, and swimming pools, Pate proof cement colors, Insulate walls, Kroye

Pasadena's Model House

shakes, tile, composition shingles, asbestos shingles and building needs; Babcock Corning Co., designed and manufactured the lighting fixtures in lobby and main office; E. O. Nay Co., exhibiting American Radiator Company hot water home heating equipment; Sears, Roebuck & Co., showing all steel sink and tubs; Super Six Cold Spas, refrigerator and Hercules water heater; Pasadena Lumber Co., showing No. 1 wood, a processed wood-clad wood, separated into individual sheets intended to form a multiple purpose board; Olin Lumber Co., presenting a miniature lumber yard and various building materials; Red Cedar Shingle Bureau, "Certified Shingles" to build a lifetime roof; The Woods Maytag Shop, featuring Maytag Refrigerators and Ranges, Maytag, A.R.C., Hepburn and General Electric products; Green Co., showing a modern household water system, a

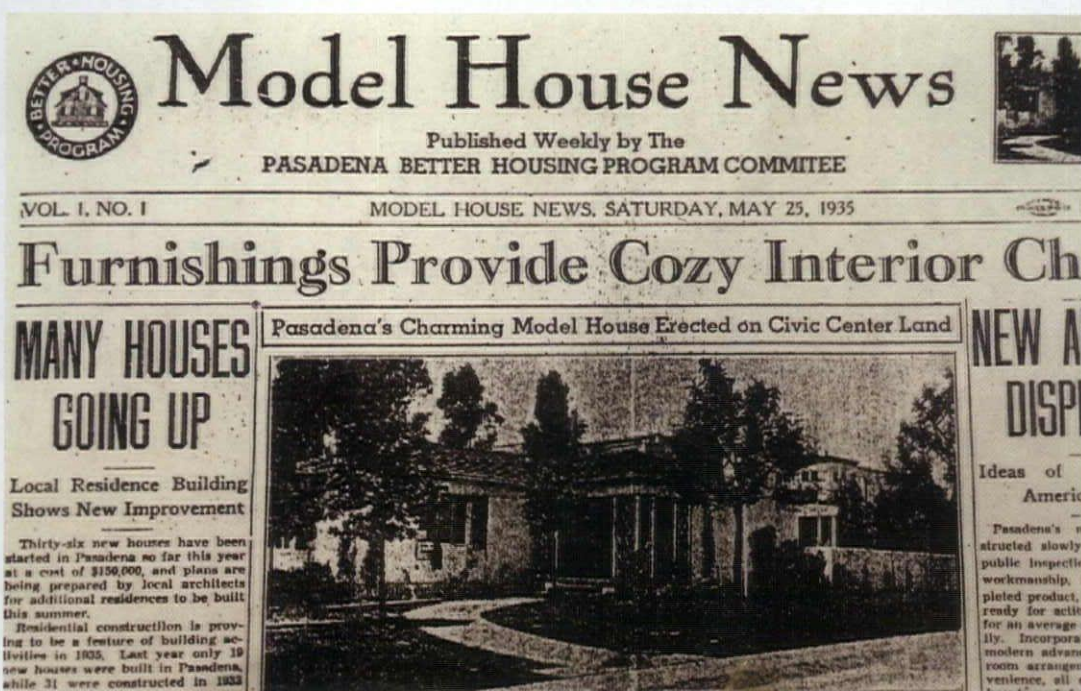


Photo: Barbara Lamprecht

THINK BIG, DESIGN SMALL

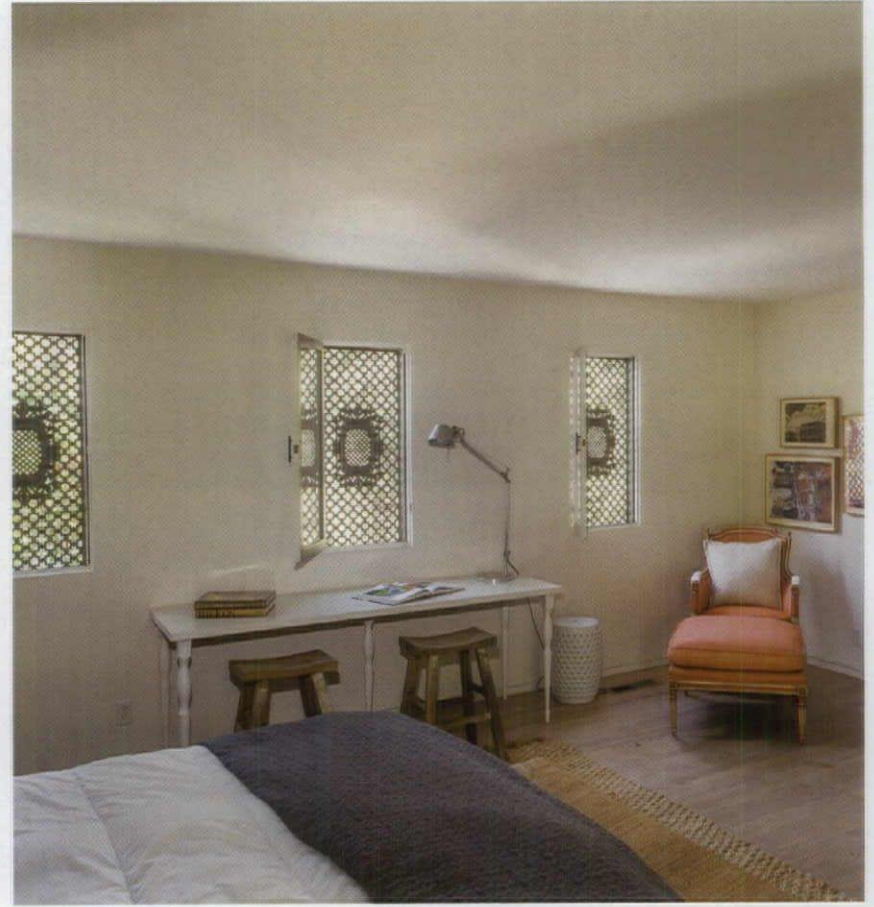
Theodore Pletsch was no stranger to the local demand for the small house. The June 1923 issue of *California Southland* reveals that he became a member of the Architectural Club of Los Angeles that month and joined the "Small House Committee," focused on the "small house problem." Architects were invited to submit plans for houses costing no more than \$7,000 (exactly what Pletsch's entry cost). Plans were sold for \$60, with a \$10 fee to the architect and \$10 more for modifications. "If all the club members will get behind the scheme, it cannot but be a howling success—idealistically and financially. Think it over," the newsletter enthused.

Pletsch's solution—a charming home (above) that skillfully blended a number of revival styles—catapulted the success of his practice. He estimated that his model house won him 400 commissions. And by contrast to the fate of many other exposition or demonstration houses, his small wood-frame, low-hipped house is alive and well. In November 1935 it was raffled off, cut in two and moved to northern Pasadena; it eventually sold in 1941 to Mark Serrurier, the Caltech engineer and son of *Moviola* creator Iwan Serrurier who ran his father's company after World War II and redesigned his father's invention, eventually receiving a special Academy Award for technical achievement in 1979. No longer in the family, the home is remarkably unchanged today from that 1935 cover article drawing. The Serrurier House, as it is now known, still occupies its serene, pastoral site amidst giant conifers, a sycamore, and oak trees. — B.L.



Ignoring the rising pressure to downsize residential building footprints during that decade of desperation, Pletsch included a discreet interior entry feeding other rooms, displacing the local paradigm of stepping right into the living room. The gesture provided some dignity and grace for the transition between public and private spaces. The home was well-appointed, too, with quarter-sawn oak floors, marble-veined linoleum, electric range, "filtered lighting" that washed upper walls to reduce glare and solid-brass hardware and fixtures. A shoe-shining cabinet was tucked below a concealed ironing board. And something we take

for granted today—a light above the kitchen sink—was lauded as "sending soft rays of light that rival the soft glows of the San Diego Exhibition [possibly a reference to the Panama-California International Exhibition, 1935.] Part of a larger exhibition on small houses, his design made the front page of the *Pasadena Star-News* on February 18, 1935; astonishingly, a reported 39,000 people paid 10 cents each to tour it in the first two days of the show. "Matter of fact, you know I probably had more influence on small houses than anybody that ever existed," Pletsch boasted in his oral history.

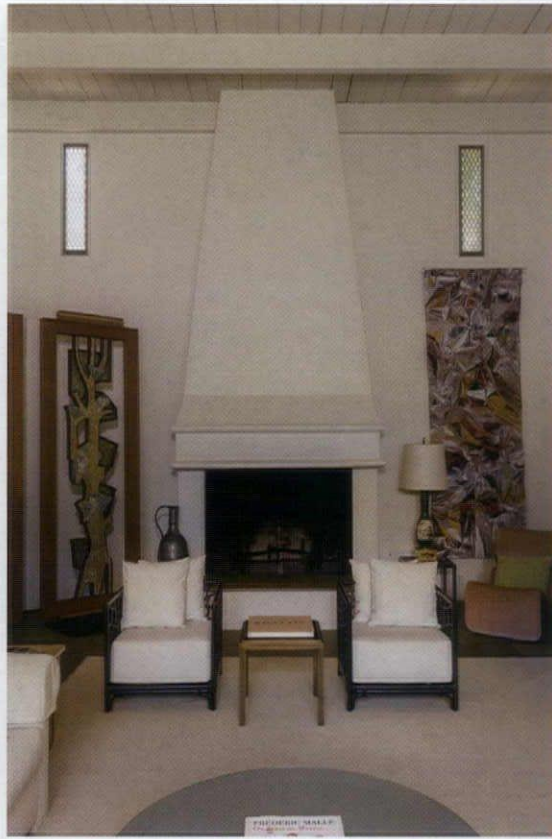
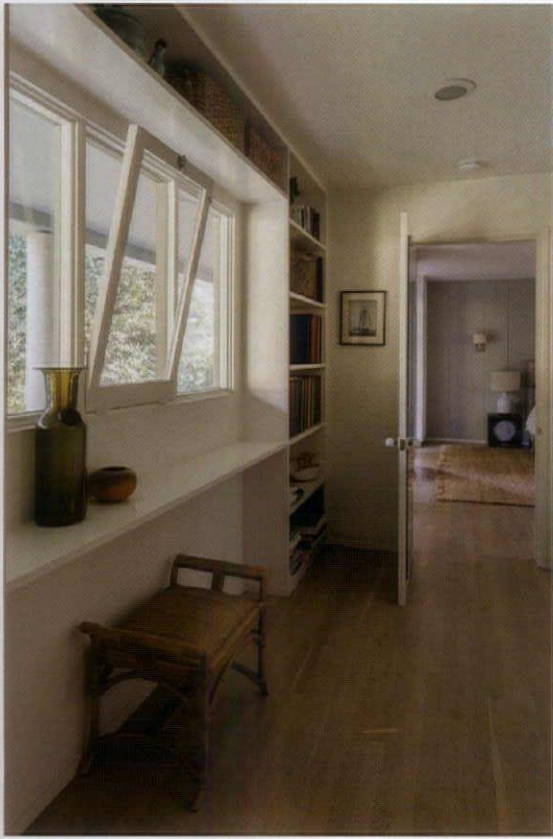


Pletsch's commercial work reveals that he easily adapted to various styles. More importantly, many of his buildings survive because of the rich texture, scale, and sense of place they have conferred on the Southland, especially Pasadena and Altadena. He was proud of the first black-tile office building he designed in 1931 on Green Street in Pasadena, a beautiful two-story Art Deco building occupied by a landscape architecture firm today. He also designed the San Marino Tribune building, about 12 Planned Parenthood clinics, cemeteries, and condominium complexes.

In 1930, Pletsch built the area's first drive-in market, Hen's Teeth Square. Designed in a stripped-down Spanish Revival style, he wrapped two buildings that formed an L around a small corner parking lot. The facades featured large arches of white brick infilled with glass that set up a lovely, stately rhythm. Here again, Pletsch was right in stride with other early (and more well-known) strategies to accommodate the "motor car" in

Los Angeles retail and commercial ventures such as Leimert Park (1928), designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm, as well as Chapman Plaza, a handsome market constructed in the ornate Churrigueresque style in 1929. Hen's Teeth remains a vibrant community landmark housing a café and clothing and food markets.

Both Hen's Teeth in the commercial realm and the Crowell House in the residential arena demonstrate Pletsch's characteristic approach to innovative problem solving, his sensitivity to the client as an individual and his concern for preserving and harnessing the qualities of an existing landscape. Looking at his work, it is futile to try and tie Pletsch to a "style." He just doesn't fit into any particular mold. As he put it, "An architect isn't a guy who has to do controversial buildings ... I design environments for human beings that fit that particular human being and every human being is different." ¹⁰



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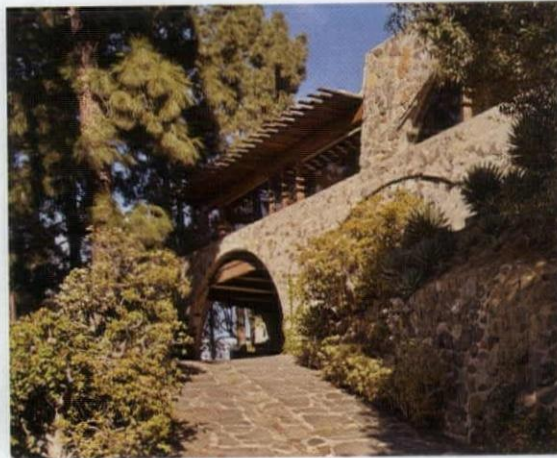
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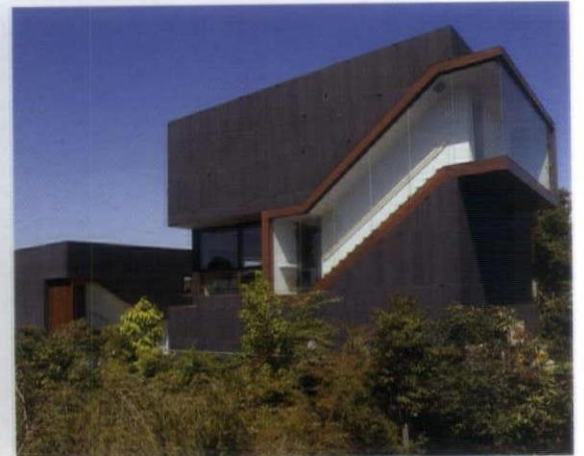
#1135
La Canada Flintridge, CA

Ted Criley Jr., A.I.A.
\$ 3,228,000



#1134
Los Angeles, CA

Lloyd Wright, Architect
\$ 2,395,000



#1114
Los Angeles, CA

Studio 0.10 Architects
\$ 3,500,000



#1007
Madison, CT

Philip Johnson, F.A.I.A.
\$ 1,950,000



#1004
Christiansted, Virgin Islands

St. Croix Dome
\$ 1,499,000



#1132
Los Angeles, CA

Saul Harris Brown, Architect
\$ 3,495,000



#1027
Pasadena, CA

Arthur & Alfred Heineman, Architects
\$ 4,780,000



#1093
London, UK

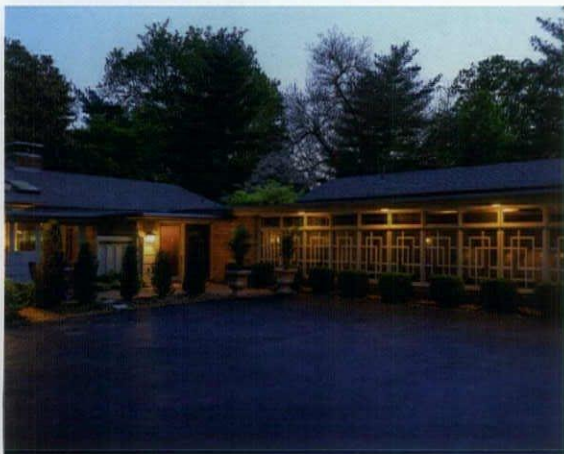
David Adjaye, Architect
£ 5,500,000



#967
Fontainebleau, near Paris

1970s Design Residence
€ 1,100,000

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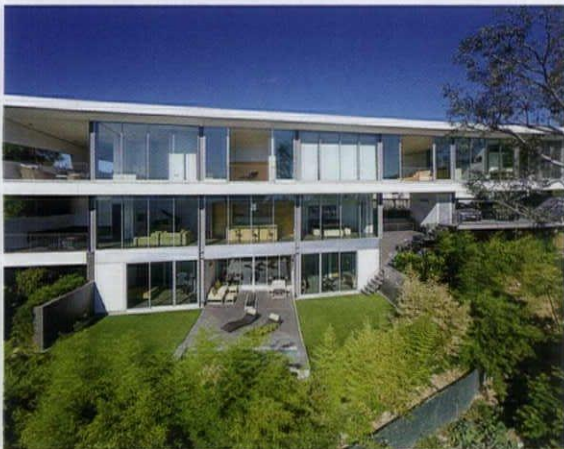
#1054 Bernoudy-Designed Residence
Ladue, MO \$ 1,350,000



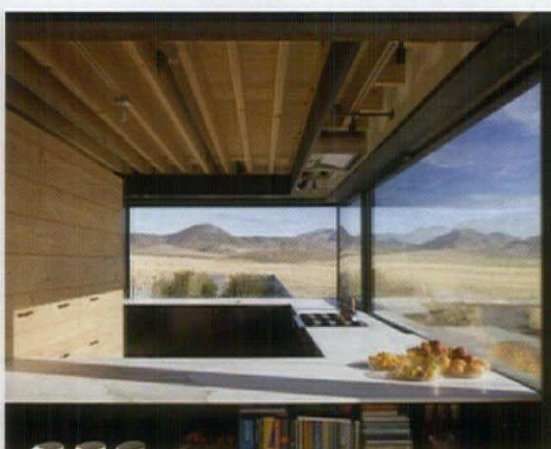
#1129 Jack Hillmer, Architect
Kenfield, CA \$ 3,698,000



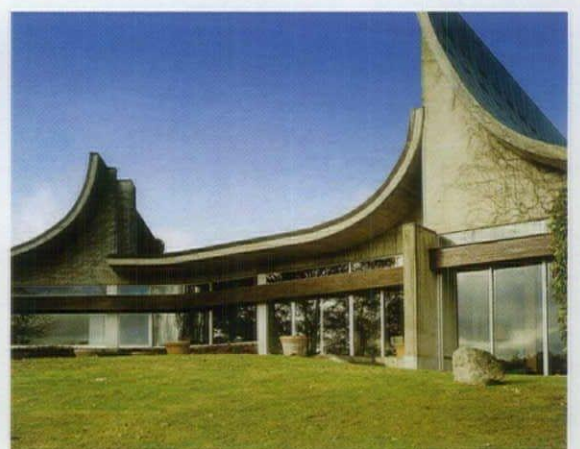
#1128 Rex Hohlbein, Architect
Clyde Hill, WA \$ 6,200,000



#1088 SPF:a Architects - Zoltan Pali, F.A.I.A.
Beverly Hills, CA \$ 6,900,000



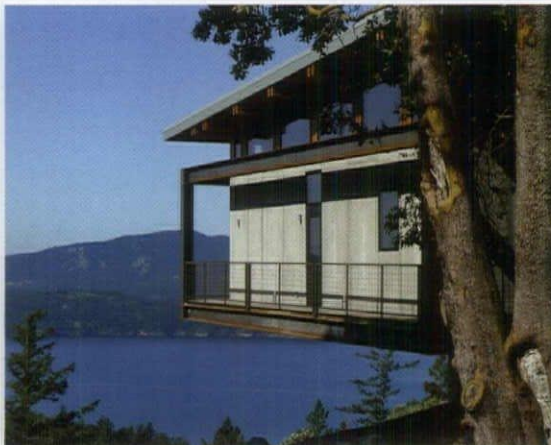
#858 Olson Kundig Architects
Bellevue, ID \$ 3,200,000



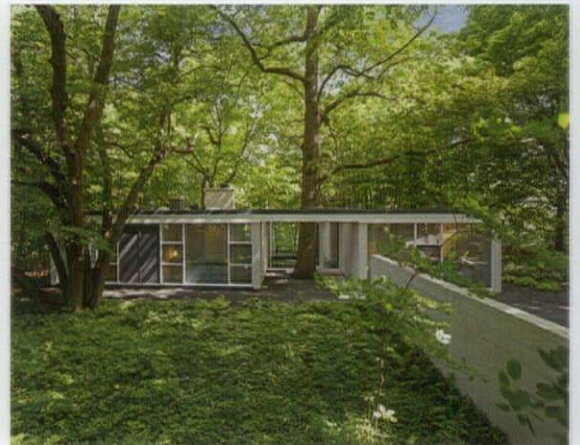
#1079 Claude Parent, Architect
Bois-le-Roy, France €1,260,000



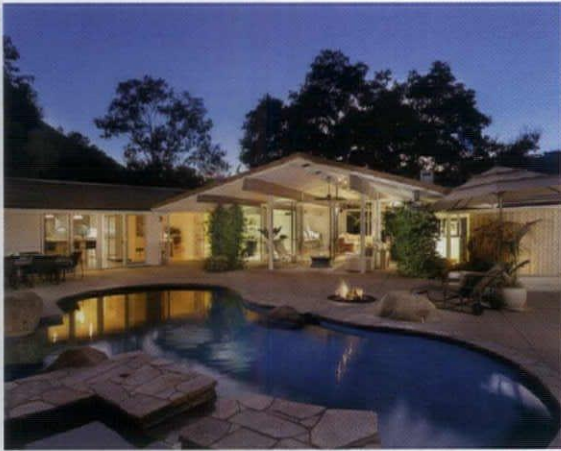
#1016 James Yates, Architect
Stuart, FL \$4,995,000



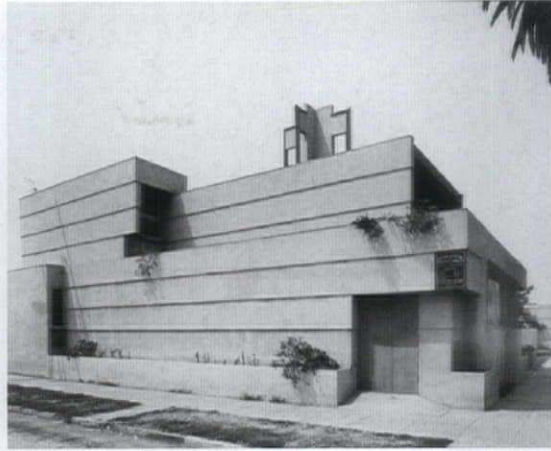
#1012 Indigo Architecture & Design
Eastsound, WA \$ 2,895,000



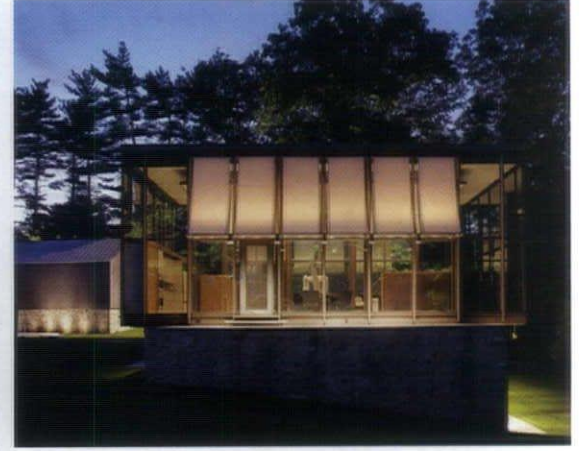
#1071 Ralph Rapson, Architect
Chanhausen, MN \$ 750,000



#1127
Bell Canyon, CA
Cliff May, Designer
\$ 2,495,000



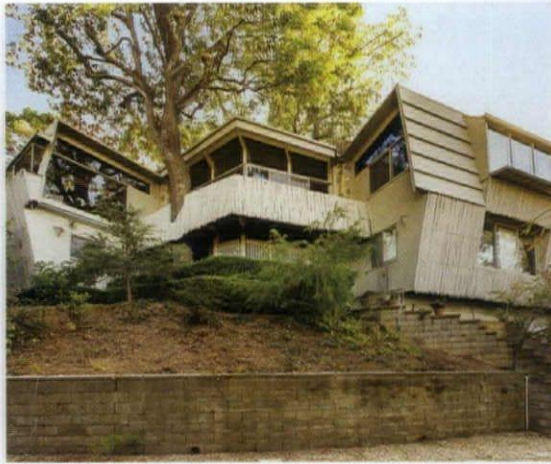
#1060
Los Angeles, CA
R.M. Schindler, Architect
\$ 1,490,000



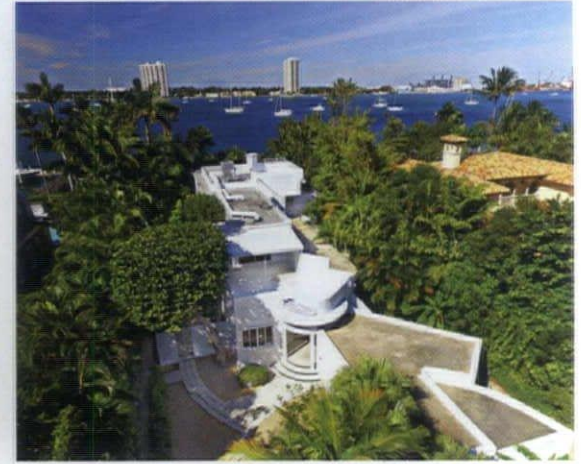
#1078
New Canaan, CT
Philip Johnson, Architect
\$ 14,000,000



#1105
Lake Quivira, KS
Bruce Goff, Architect
\$ 599,000



#1125
Los Angeles, CA
Rudolph Schindler, Architect
\$ 2,395,000



#1123
Palm Beach, FL
Belford Shoumate
\$ 8,995,000



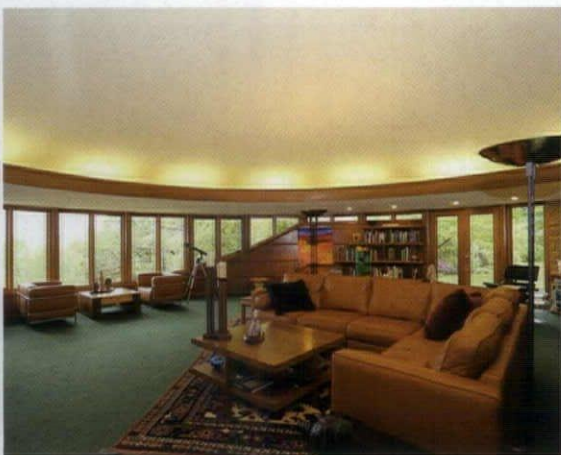
#929
Anacortes, WA
Richard T. Broderick, A.I.A.
\$1,195,000



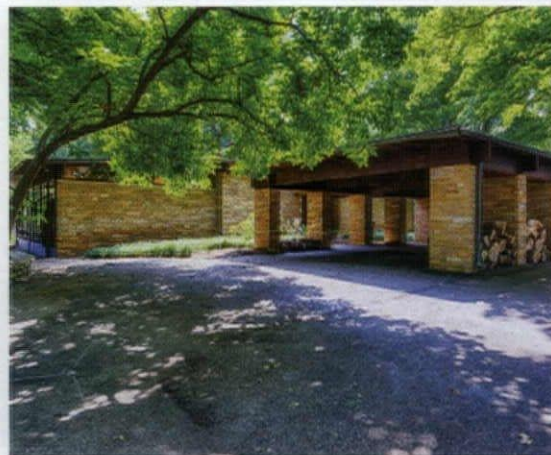
#1106
Mission Hills, KS
Marcel Breuer, Architect
\$925,000



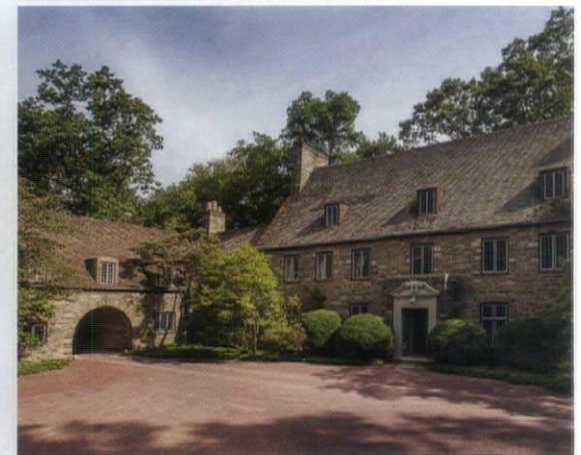
#1121
Glencoe, IL
Frank Lloyd Wright
\$ 1,700,000



#1091
Black Earth, WI
William Wesley Peters, Architect
\$ 1,900,000

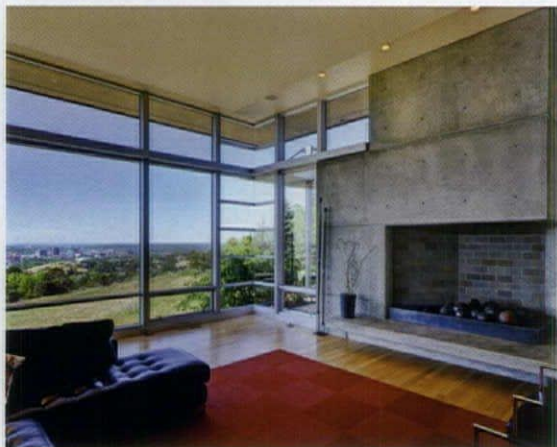


#1053
Chesterfield, MO
Ralph Fournier, Architect
\$ 2,000,000



#1072
Greenwich, CT
Harrie T. Lindeberg, Architect
\$ 14,800,000

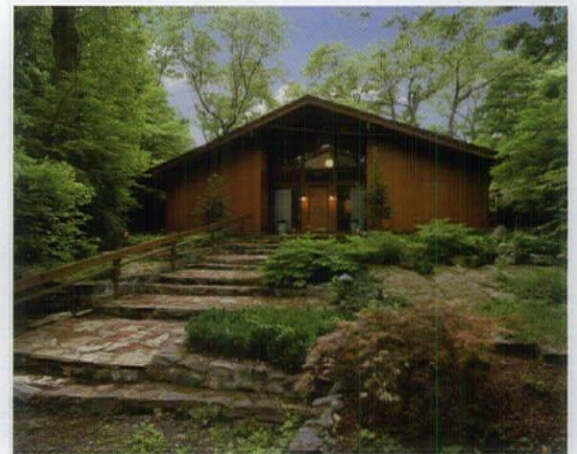
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#980 J.T. Glancey, G. Rockwell & Associates
Boise, ID \$ 2,150,000



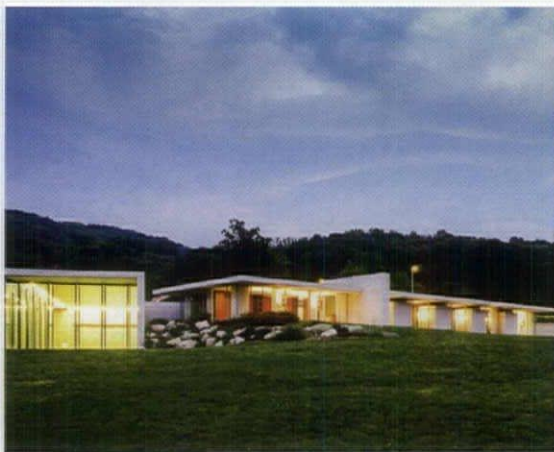
#1055 Bernoudy Treasure
Augusta, MO \$ 1,175,000



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



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



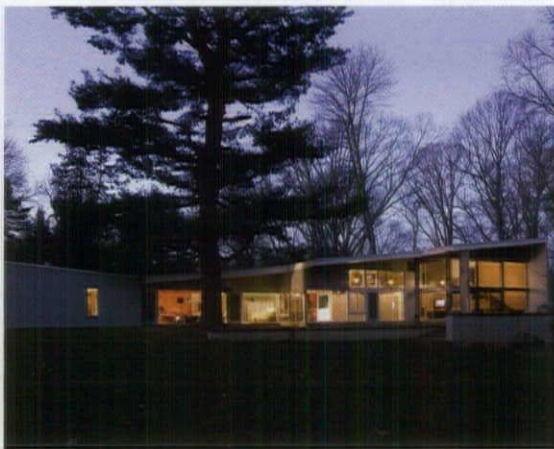
#1082 Pierre Fauroux, Architect
near Grenoble, France € 1,870,000



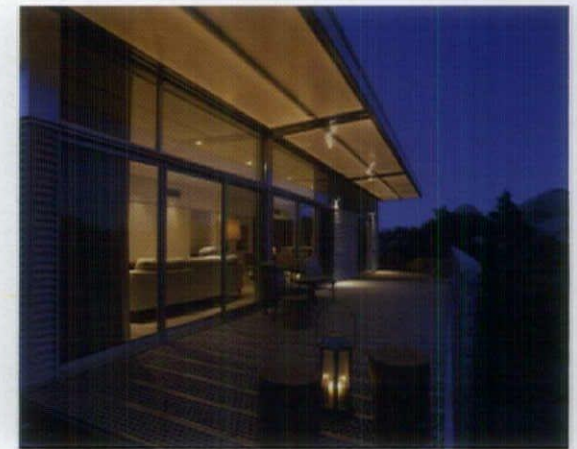
#1119 Eliot Noyes & Bob Graf, Designers
Wilton, CT \$ 1,780,000



#1083 Bernadette Jacques, Architect
near Nice, France € 6,500,000



#1056 Marcel Breuer, Architect
Princeton, NJ \$ 1,470,000



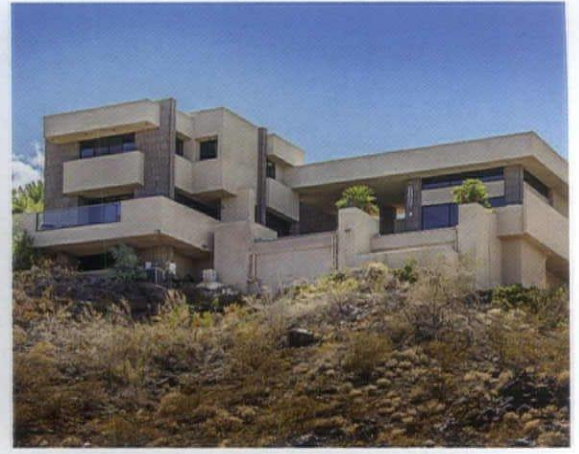
#1041 Blue Sky Building Systems
Yucca Valley, CA \$ 674,000



#1136 Fred McDowell AIA, 1954, Rufus Turner AIA
Claremont, CA \$ 799,000



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



#1097 Buff & Hensman, 1985 – 1988
Boulder City, NV \$ 2,950,000



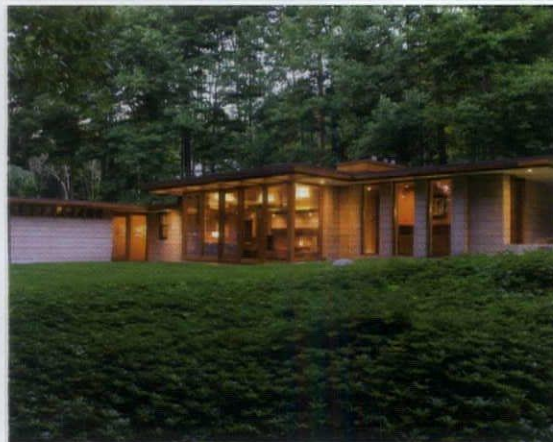
#1075 Rick Joy, Architect
Woodstock, VT \$ 9,000,000



#1076 Alan Wazenber, Architect
Quechee, VT \$ 5,750,000



#1039 Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect
Willoughby Hills, OH \$1,700,000



#758 Allan Gelbin Design
Weston, CT \$ 1,250,000



#1087 Arthur Holden, Architect
Darien, CT \$ 2,465,000



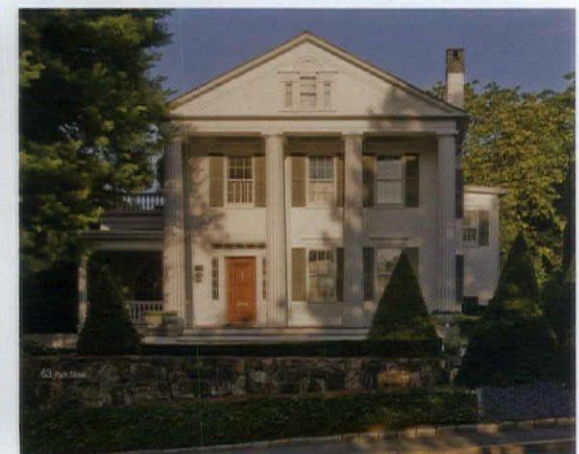
#1040 Roy Johnson, Architect
Armonk, NY \$ 3,500,000



#1032 Edward Dart, A.I.A.
Glencoe, IL \$2,490,000



#1059 Stephen Guerrant, A.I.A.
Winnetka, IL \$ 1,275,000



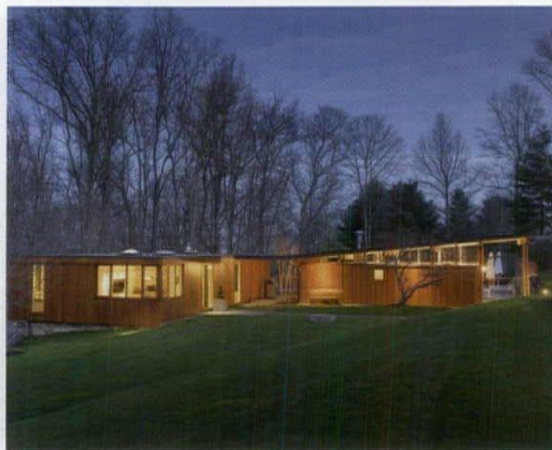
#1062 Richard Bergmann, F.A.I.A., ASLA
New Canaan, CT \$ 3,500,000

on the market at architectureforsale.com™



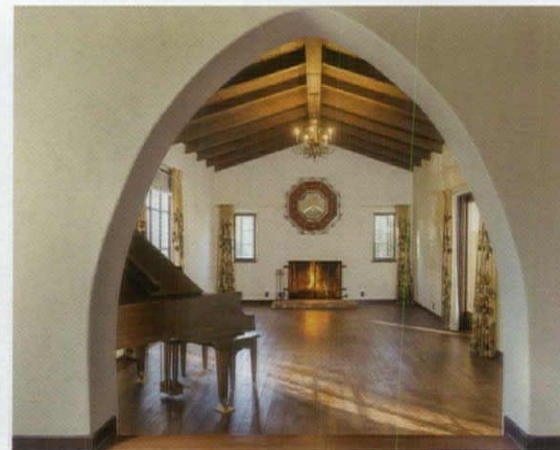
#1096
Pound Ridge, NY

Vuko Tashkovich, Architect
\$ 4,650,000



#1131
New Canaan, CT

Eliot Noyes, Architect
\$ 6,950,000



#1130
Los Angeles, CA

Gilbert Stanley Underwood, Architect
\$ 1,695,000



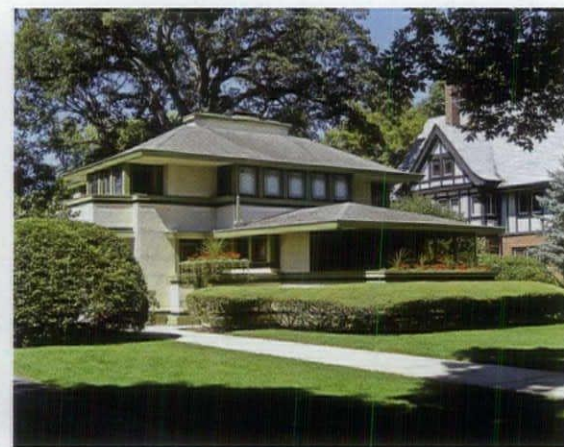
#950
Cold Spring, NY

River Architects
\$ 1,600,000



#1103
Würenlos, Switzerland

A. Fuhrmann & G. Haechler, Architects
\$ 5,350,000



#1064
River Forest, IL

Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect
\$ 999,000



#1100
Redlands, CA

Robert D. Farquhar, Architect
\$ 6,990,000



#1117
Surrey, UK

Amyas Connell, Architect
£ 1,850,000



#1042
Ghent, NY

Michael Bell, Architect
\$ 1,950,000

Richard Neutra and Group of Students (Photograph by Arne Fischer)



INSPIRING THE NEXT

Richard Neutra

The College of Environmental Design at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona is proud to educate the next generation of creative thinkers.

In the late 1960s, internationally renowned Austrian-American modernist architect **Richard Neutra** taught as a lecturer when the college was a fledgling department. Today, its nationally ranked programs serve students of the allied disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, art history and graphic design, and urban and regional planning. His teaching philosophy deeply influences the college's mission to **design the future**.

To honor Neutra's ties to the university his family donated their home, the **Neutra VDL Studio and Residences**, to the College of Environmental Design. It was recently designated a **National Historic Landmark** in recognition of its cultural significance.

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