**Bubeshko Apartments Reborn**

**SAH/SCC Tour & Talk**  
**Saturday, June 13, 2015, 2-4PM**

SAH/SCC Life Members and Patrons are invited to a rare visit to R.M. Schindler’s Bubeshko Apartments in Silver Lake, whose award-winning restoration was done by DSH/ architecture. We'll tour the owners’ unit with the architects who brought the property back to life, Chava Danielson, AIA, and Eric Haas, AIA, and hear about their research, challenges, and process. The afternoon visit will end with a wine-and-cheese reception on the patio.

Schindler designed and built the two neighboring apartment buildings between 1938 and 1941 for mother-and-daughter clients. The clients’ vision of a Silver Lake salon for artists, architects, and musicians was met by Schindler’s concept of a “Greek hillside” of five units, each different in size, configuration, orientation, and finishes.

The project to rehabilitate these buildings from years of benign neglect was one of probing their history by engaging a deep understanding of Schindler’s formative theories, his architectural intentions, and their ultimate material realization. Not wanting to freeze the project in time, yet at the same time respecting its origins, the architects and new owners focused on the project’s DNA: its generative ideas, theories of spatial configuration, and employment of color and material.

The team concentrated on material systems throughout the project; stained plywood, painted wood, and colored plaster were used systematically to produce a matrix of individuated dwelling spaces. The use of color is integral to how these systems form space and shape environments. Schindler’s concern with these effects stood in contrast to the reductive esthetic of the International Style.

His muted, translucent palette was restored using environmentally sound stains and pigments, with the new owners deeply involved in the process. Fixtures, appliances, and building systems were upgraded in line with contemporary standards.

The rebirth of these important buildings acts as a model for future sensitive restoration work. Careful study, open to revision, undertaken with economy, environmental sensitivity, and integrity, respects the past and responds to the present. DSH/’s restoration has received numerous awards, including those from AIA/LA, AIA/CC, Los Angeles Conservancy, California Preservation Foundation, and State of California.

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*All Photos: © Grant Mudford*
SAH/SCC President’s Letter

Special Collections

I recently had the good fortune to visit Special Collections at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to do some research for a project in Palm Springs. Cal Poly is home to two collections of drawings by architect William F. Cody, FAIA (1916-1978).

Cody is probably best known for his work in desert communities, including Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, and Palm Desert. However, Cody also designed projects around other areas of Southern California, as well as in Phoenix, Mexico, and Cuba. Cody’s Modernist aesthetic was applied to hundreds of residences and numerous country clubs, hotels, libraries, and churches.

In addition to his own projects, the archive contains a few designs by the young architect during his tenure in Cliff May’s office in the 1930s. May’s influence can be seen not only in the development of Cody’s architectural ideas, but also in his vision of himself as an architectural brand—creating a May-esque logo and signature block for his early projects. According to authors Alan Hess and Andrew Danish in Palm Springs Weekend: The Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis (Chronicle Books, 2001), Cody was initially confused and angered by Modernism, and his designs echo a care for warmth and lifestyle, rather than those of overriding theoretical purity.

L’Horizon Hotel, Palm Springs (1952) by William F. Cody, FAIA. Courtesy: Los Angeles Public Library

The two collections are also rich and robust from an imagery standpoint; just a few hours of looking at a few selected projects revealed the presence of many lovely large-scale renderings. Sketches abound, along with notebooks and other materials that provide keen insight into how the architect worked. Such materials are rich with possibility for scholarship and publication.

I was surprised to learn from the librarians at the archive that the Cody collections have not yet been the subject of deep study. Anyone in search of a meaty and meaningful research project would do well to delve further into the work of Bill Cody. The two collections each have their own finding aids at the Online Archive of California. Increased awareness and understanding of the work of this important architect is a noble pursuit.

—Sian Winship

Historic Places in the Palm of Your Hand

A new, mobile-friendly site from City of LA and Getty Conservation Institute, HistoricPlacesLA (HPLA) is an online information and management system created to inventory, map, describe, and help protect LA’s significant cultural resources. Containing data gathered through SurveyLA and other sources, the inventory is freely accessible online, and includes approximately 25,000 historic resources, including 430 historic districts, 1,065 LA Historic Cultural Monuments, 29 LA HPOZs, and 300 places on the National Register.

“HPLA is positive proof that our city has attained the maturity to fully take stock of its past, and is using that information on our rich history and architecture to guide planning for our future,” said LA Office of Historic Resources Manager Ken Bernstein at a press conference held in the Bradley Room at the top of City Hall.

A key aid for architecture and history enthusiasts, HPLA is also promoted to developers and planners. “Developers have never had such a powerful tool to direct us to potential opportunities for adaptive reuse projects, or to help us make sure we don’t inadvertently affect significant historic resources in areas that we’re considering for development,” said Wayne Ratkovich, of The Ratkovich Company.

SurveyLA—covering city resources from 1865 to 1980—is nearly 75 percent complete; as more information becomes available, it will be added to the website. “This city will talk to you,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Today, we have a roadmap to listen to every corner.” www.HistoricPlacesLA.org
Authors on Architecture: Arenson on Sheets

SAH/SCC Talk
Sunday, June 14, 2015, at 2-4PM


For more than three decades, Sheets and his studio of artists designed Home Savings and Loan branches throughout California, studding their iconic projects with mosaics, murals, stained glass, and sculptures that celebrated both family life and the history of the Golden State. The collaboration between the Millard Sheets Studio and Howard Ahmanson, Home Savings’ executive, resulted in more than 40 branches designed and built between the completion of the first collaboration in 1955 and Ahmanson’s death in 1968. It set the course for more than 100 additional branches that bore the Home Savings name until the institution was sold to Washington Mutual in 1998.

This first book-length study of these Home Savings buildings recovers Sheets’ and Ahmanson’s visions for these institutions as they shaped the corporate and cultural landscape of Southern California. It explores the mystery of why Home Savings and Loan—a financial institution that rose to lead the nation in deposits—commissioned hundreds of murals and paintings. It advances contemporary urban history by connecting this corporate investment in public memory with the long history of commercial patronage dating to the Renaissance, as well as to the recent history of percent-for-art regulations.

Arenson, an associate professor of history and the director of Urban Studies at Manhattan College in the Bronx, NY, has created a richly illustrated book that is the first published monograph on Sheets. Combining private investment and public art, championing historical themes in a period of dramatic cultural and political change, the Home Savings and Loan buildings are signature structures of Midcentury Modern architecture, and their story deserves to be known before it is too late to save these remarkable works.

Authors on Architecture: Arenson—Sunday, June 14, 2015, 2-4PM; Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium at the Santa Monica Central Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica; free; seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis; 310.458.8600.
Provocations: The Architecture and Design of Heatherwick Studio

A central spine organizes the exhibition. Photo: Brian Forest

Delightful smiles are not always expected at an architecture exhibition (think: studied looks and squinted eyes), but at “Provocations: The Architecture and Design of Heatherwick Studio,” wonder and joy pervade the exhibition and enchant its viewers. Thomas Heatherwick—the British designer known for the 2012 London Olympic Torch, UK Pavilion in Shanghai, and new Google headquarters—exudes a wonder in life, purpose, and society in a non-linear display of selected projects. Models, photographs, materials samples, over-scaled images, videos, and life-size prototypes join with intriguing text for an immersive experience.

Visitors are first introduced to the work by a life-size segment of the New Bus for London in the corridor leading to the gallery. The next piece right inside the gallery is the Exhibition Brochure Machine, a contraption that allows gallery goers to turn a crank that powers rolls of printed paper, a narrow strip of which is offered to visitors to tear off and fold their own guide on demand. It’s a fitting participatory preview to Heatherwick’s focus on processes.

The exhibition itself is designed with a central spine accessed from all sides holding models and materials samples, as well as product prototypes. The back wall sports a similar one-sided arrangement. On the other three walls, large photos and renderings are arranged more or less connecting to the projects. Extruded benches and a case of whimsical holiday cards from the studio round out the offerings.

Curator Brooke Hodge (late of MOCA and The Hammer and now at NYC’s Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum—the next stop for the show) presents project explanations in the form of Q&A. Some of these literal provocations relay architectural goals: “How can a building represent a nation?” “How do you give individuality to the skin of an inexpensive building?” Some are about process: “Can you squeeze a chair out of a machine, the way you squeeze toothpaste out of a tube?” “Is it possible to make a bridge out of glass?” And still others posit possibilities: “Can a building stand up on the architectural equivalent of matchsticks?” “Can a giant sculpture fit through a mail slot?”

Presenting the exhibition labels in this way beautifully positions architects and designers as problem-solvers, not theoretical dreamers—no matter how fanciful or abstract the questions. It is also a wonderful way to engage visitors, whether familiar with design vocabulary or not, into the process. Along with a few examples of built structures—the concrete wonder of Singapore’s Learning Hub, the innovative and inspiring UK Pavilion, the expressively contextual East Beach Café—the exhibition’s many bridges, household and fashion products, furnishings, and sculptures, may question the definitions of architecture, but never the crux of turning ideas into human-centered realities.

“When I was young, inventors caught my attention,” said Heatherwick. “They don’t have a style, they look for ideas.” Amid the wonder and whimsy are serious investigations of urban conditions, environmentalism, community, and culture. “I’m looking for the logic that drives everything,” he continued. “What’s the idea that has a logic to it?”

The Hammer show closes on May 24th. Skip—don’t walk—experience it.

—Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA/LA

SAH/SCC PUBLICATIONS

______ at $5 each

Masters of Modernism: eight-page, two-color brochure featuring works of Richard Neutra and Frank Lloyd Wright in Bakersfield.

______ at $3 each

Architecture: Inside and Outside: 5"x5" folded color brochure featuring Santa Barbara’s Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, and Val Verde.

______ at $12 each

Out of the Shadow: 24-page, two-color brochure from Phoenix travel tour featuring the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Al Beadle, Blaine Drake, Paolo Soleri, Edward B. Sawyer, Bennie Gonzales, and Will Bruder.

______ at $3 each

A Block in Glendale: pocket-size fandeck of cards featuring five diverse properties—including a Paul Williams residence—plus historical background information on the Brockmont Heights subdivision.

______ at $8 each

Rodney Walker 3 30 90: 12-page brochure featuring nine homes on five sites, as well as the architect’s use of the three-foot module.

______ at $4 each

Greta Magnusson Grossman: 3.5” x 8” 2-page color brochure featuring two residences by Greta Grossman.

______ at $8 each

Space and Learning: eight-page, four-color brochure on the historical and contemporary legacy of LA school architecture, featuring projects by Richard Neutra, Thom Mayne, Rios Clementi Hale Studios, and others.

______ at $5 each

Rodney Walker: The Ojai Years: tri-fold, black-and-white brochure featuring Walker’s important residences in Ojai, with pictures and article by historian David Mason.

______ at $2 each

Kesling Homes: bi-fold, two-color brochure from the “Kesling Modern Structures” tour.

______ at $2 each

Union Station and MTA Transit Center: bi-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos.

______ at $10 each

Modernism for the Masses: tri-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floor plans of Eichler homes visited on the Orange County tour.

______ at $8 each

Conjunctive Points: four-color, 11”x17” brochure featuring a 20-building walking tour of the Hayden Tract, designed by architect Eric Owen Moss and developed by Samitaur Constructs.

______ at $10 each

The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura: 20-page guide from Ventura tour.

______ at $5 each


______ at $4 each

Killingsworth: A Master Plan for Learning: 11”x17”, four-color walking tour brochure of the Cal State Long Beach campus features history of master plan development by architect Edward A. Killingsworth, FAIA.

______ at $8 each


______ at $8 each

John Parkinson, Downtown: 11”x17”, four-color brochure featuring a self-guided walking tour of Parkinson buildings in Downtown LA’s historic core and beyond.

______ at $5 each

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SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS / SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER NEWS May/June 2015 5
SAH/ORDER FORM

SAH/SCC is a 501c 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing its members with opportunities to learn about and experience the rich architectural heritage of Southern California and beyond. Our volunteer board members create tours, lectures, travel tours, and other events that explore the ideas behind the architecture as well as the buildings that result from them. From modern to craftsman, from Spanish Colonial to contemporary, our programs are the best-kept secrets in Southern California!

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BOOKMARKS

Crestwood Hills: The Chronicle of a Modern Utopia

by Cory Buckner

Cooperative Modern edens advertising Southern California Living—Baldwin Hills Village/Village Green, Channel Heights Housing, Community Homes, Avenel Cooperative, Broadacre, Eichler, to name a few—are widely chronicled by historians, coveted by Modernists, and too often mourned by preservationists.

Author and architect Cory Buckner tells the story of the optimistic Crestwood Hills, a Brentwood community conceived in 1947 by four musicians who founded the Mutual Housing Association (MHA), which sold plots for 500 homes. Buckner is known from her previous book A. Quincy Jones (Phaidon Press, 2002), the Modern master’s first monograph. This book and community are very personal to Buckner. She had restored two Crestwood Hills homes prior to moving there, and went on to work on seven more, including her own that she restored with her late husband Nick Roberts, AIA.

The first part of the book beautifully presents the history, process, and challenges of the development. Architects Whitney R. Smith and A. Quincy Jones, FAIA, engineer Edgardo Contini, and landscape architect Garret Eckbo created multiple house plan options for the Modern community. The second part of the book reviews and describes individual homes with archival and current photography. Restoration architects are noted, but stating the date would have been helpful. Also included are “infill houses,” those built after MHA disbanded, and designed by Ray Kappe, FAIA, Craig Ellwood, Rodney Walker, and Richard Neutra, FAIA. “Despite virulent opposition from local authorities all the way up to the Federal government, Crestwood Hills was built as conceived: people lived in architecturally significant structures, and people continue to live in those homes in the twenty-first century,” says Buckner in the introduction. A mere 47 of the original homes remain extant, with 18 of them declared—with Buckner’s help—City of LA Historic-Cultural Monuments.

Angel City Press; 176 pages; softcover; $35.