

NEWS

March/April

2011



Wally (Wallace) Wirick on the framing extending from the floor of his mother's studio.

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Modern Patrons: Straub in Pasadena

SAH/SCC Tour & Talk: Pasadena Saturday, April 30, 2011, 2-4PM

Join us for a very special Saturday afternoon in April for another signature event in our Modern Patrons Program with an opportunity to visit the Thomas and Barbara Wirick House in Pasadena, designed by Calvin Straub.

The Wirick House is a shining example of how architect Straub integrated a postand-beam house into a steep hill. Its architecture represents the best of the "USC School of Architecture" in blending a simple, warm, woodsy feeling, showing Straub's love of Greene and Greene, with the rigor of Mies van der Rohe (one of the school's important inspirations in the postwar curriculum). Completed in 1958, the house is based on a module of 2:1 beginning with its overall dimensions of 24' x 48'. The breathtaking double-height living room overlooks the steep hill the house is part of, attached to the slope by stairs and a driveway/bridge leading into the upper-level garage. At the time, the lot cost \$2,750 and the building about \$10 per square foot. Materials include clear-heart Douglas Fir, board-and-batten siding, brick, and stucco.

The residence is now a contributor to the Poppy Peak Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places just last year. The hilly area, located in the very southwest corner of Pasadena, is dense with outstanding houses designed by WWII-veteran USC grads, all eager to try a hand at designing houses on land most developers shied away from. The district is well worth a



The Wirick House today.

Photo: Barbara Lamprecht

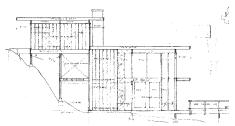
walk to see how each house shows a special sensitivity to site, orientation, and land.

As usual, we will have the opportunity to enjoy the house and also learn firsthand about how the house took shape and the special relationship between the homeowner and the architect. Make your plans to join us for an unforgettable experience in another remarkable example of our region's extensive architectural heritage.

Modern Patrons: Straub in Pasadena: April 30, 2011; 2-4PM; \$10 each for SAH/SCC Patron and Life Members; reservations required; space is limited; tickets will be made available to general membership should the opportunity arise, on a first-come first-served basis; registration—see order form on Page 6, call 800.972.4722, or go to www.sahscc.org.



The Wirick House under construction. Photo: Courtesy Barbara Wirick



East elevation of Wirick House. Image: Courtesy Barbara Wirick

SAH/SCC President's Letter

For those of you who attended our 2005 tour of Ed Killingsworth buildings in Long Beach, you will surely be alternately thrilled and distressed to learn about the University Religious Center (URC) on the University of Southern California (USC) campus. As the University contemplates how to meet the changing needs of a growing student population, it has been evaluating the future of several historic resources, the URC among them.

The URC was built in 1965 by Killingsworth, Brady, and Associates as an integrative complex for five Protestant denominations: Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists, and Episcopalians. The purpose of the building was to foster dialogue and exchange among these groups, which it does in both plan and design.



Killingsworth's URC at USC. Photo: Sian Winship

The plan provides an office suite for each group, a common chapel that seats 50, recreational reading room, dining room, and lounge. These are accommodated in four distinct two-story structures linked by delicate roof-high trellis structures that combine to form an arcade and central courtyard. According to Killingsworth scholar, author, and former SAH/SCC Board Member Cara Mullio, the courtyard "serves as an open-air auditorium accessible to the suites." All of this is open at the four corners of the plan to provide circulation opportunities for student passers-by.

The modern design of the building plays an important role in its original program—and an even more important one in its current functionality. Modernism is rooted in the development of an international language that transcends place and time. It disavows ornament. It values the connection between man and nature and advocates light and transparency as fundamental features. All of these elements reinforce the agenda for dialogue among the original five denominations. Today, moreover, the URC suites are home not just to Protestant denominations, but also to Catholic, Islamic, and Anglican ministries as well. As such, the modern design of the complex—with its transparency, lack of iconography, and open planning—provides an egalitarian and respectful platform upon which these groups can comingle. The utility of the design is reinforced by the fact that the original, all-glass reading room has since been adapted as "the fishbowl chapel"—a place for nondenominational religious observance and meditation.

Those of you who came on the Beyond the Bauhaus tour in 2003 will remember our visit to the Harvard Center for World Religions (1960) by Jose Luis Sert. Designed as a residential (vs. office) facility, the building is an open-air courtyard enclosed on three sides. In plan and design, it lacks the sophistication of the URC.

The fate of the URC at USC is uncertain, so go have a look at it. It seems ironic that a school so concerned with its reputation may fail to recognize the URC not only for the outstanding example of functional modern architecture that it is, but also as a contributing asset to its own legacy. The emerging "USC School" or "Pasadena School," as first named by Esther Mc Coy, is just now gaining recognition. Given the unrest and strife in the world among religious movements, it is doubly ironic. Perhaps the ultimate lesson here is that, as a society, we need more buildings that foster dialogue among diverse groups and constituencies, not fewer of them.

Sian Winship



SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Tour and Event Information:

1.800.972.4722:

info@sahscc.org

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Editor: Julie D. Taylor, Hon. AIA/LA Internet Editor: Brent Eckerman Art Director: Svetlana Petrovic Administration: Arline Chambers

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Julie D. Taylor, Editor SAH/SCC News P.O. Box 56478 Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 Newsletter telephone: 310.247.1099 Newsletter fax: 310.247.8147 Newsletter e-mail: julie@taylor-pr.com

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Ojai: A Postcard History - Postponed

Due to illness, Craig Walker's slide talk based on his book Ojai: A Postcard History (Arcadia, 2010) was cancelled. Craig, a former SAH/SCC Board Member, is on the mend and promises to re-schedule for later in the year. Watch SAH/SCC News and www.sahscc.org for updates.

Santa Monica: Cradle of Modern Architecture

CPF Conference Tour Sunday, May 15, 2011, 9AM-5PM

Love modern architecture? Want to know more about its history and its conservation? Then don't miss the all-day study tour "Santa Monica: Cradle of Modern Architecture" during the 2011 California Preservation Foundation Conference, on Sunday, May 15, 2011, 9AM-5PM. You will need to register through the CPF Conference, at www.californiapreservation.org or 415.495.0349. (See next page for more Conference highlights.)

Southern California has a rich legacy of modern residential architecture, and Santa Monica is the perfect place to explore it. Santa Monica is home to significant works from every decade of the 20th century and this tour will provide a rare opportunity for access to homes by Irving Gill, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Charles and Ray Eames, Craig Ellwood, Ray Kappe, and more, including homes from the renowned *Arts & Architecture* Case Study House Program. At each location, historians, preservation-minded owners, and conservation architects will be on hand to talk about the architectural ideas, preservation challenges, and conservation opportunities associated with the sites.

Additionally, the tour will bring a new perspective to the story of modern architecture in Southern California by approaching the topic through a place-based lens. Led by SAH/SCC President Sian Winship, the tour will explore the factors that ultimately shaped modern architecture in the area in the late 1950s and 1960s,

including: a high concentration of creative individuals, such as writers, fine artists, dancers, and movie industry professionals; leading names in the promotion of modern architecture—namely Arts & Architecture magazine publisher John Entenza and author Esther McCoy; the presence of the defense industry, and its workers' demand for housing; the arrival of transportation infrastructure and urban renewal projects.

Tour participants will learn about the ideas behind the architecture, experience the spatial qualities of modern architecture that cannot be gleaned from photographs, discover solutions to conservation challenges associated with modern resources, and explore new strategies to make modern preservation issues relevant in their communities.

The tour departs from and returns to the CPF Convention headquarters at the Miramar Fairmont Hotel in Santa Monica. The tour includes shuttle van transportation to all locations, guest speakers, and box lunch. Space is limited. Ticket requests will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis, so order early to avoid disappointment. Register for the Conference and/or the tour at www.californiapreservation.org.



Entenza House by Harwell Hamilton Harris; restoration by Michael Folonis Architects. Photo: Michael Folonis



Pumphrey House by Harwell Hamilton Harris; restoration by Michael Folonis Architects. Photo: Michael Folonis

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Preservation on the Edge

CPF Conference

Santa Monica, May 15-18, 2011

We have more details for "Preservation on the Edge," the 36th Annual California Preservation Conference in Santa Monica, May 15-19, 2011. Organized by the California Preservation Foundation (CPF) and supported by local groups, such as SAH/SCC and the LA Conservancy, the conference features dozens of sessions, many of which can be purchased separately. Below are some highlights. Go to www.californiapreservation.org for more detailed schedules and registration information, or call 415.495.0349.

May 15th

Identifying, Interpreting, & Preserving Mythic Movie Landscapes of the Santa Monica Mountains. Docent-led hikes of Malibu Creek State Park and Paramount Ranch reveal how set design and filming techniques transformed recognizable Southern California scenery into exotic locales.

Santa Monica: A Walk Through History. A short walk through more than 130 years of Santa Monica's history, architecture, and culture traces the city's transformation to the internationally known beach community of today.

The Future of Preservation, an Emerging Professionals Roundtable. Experts in a variety of preservation-related fields discuss employment trends and opportunities in preservation.

May 16th

Palisades Park: Rediscovering a Cultural Landscape. History and evolution of the historic Palisades Park, which is filled with many layers of historic structures, plantings, monuments, and works of art.

What is Preservation? International luminaries discuss their personal experiences and world views on what heritage conservation means to them.

May 17th

CPF Annual Membership Meeting. Features tour of history and restoration of the Miles Playhouse (John Byers, 1929).

From Shell to Sell: Recycling an Industrial Complex Into a Commercial Showroom. Adaptive reuse case study of 1950s factory and warehouse sustainably transformed into office space and product showroom.

Incentivize It! Santa Monica's Incentives & Development Trends. Four redevelopment projects highlight preservation incentives offered in the city to balance development and preservation. Where Do We Go From Here?: The Next Generation. Graduate students discuss the current and future states of historic preservation.

May 18th

Adamson House & Malibu Tile. Historic 1929 Andalusian-style Adamson House, famous Malibu coastline, and acclaimed work of the Malibu Tile Company.

Marquez Cemetery Tour. A visit to the 1839 Pascual Marquez Family Cemetery examines graves and document foundations of the first adobe home in Santa Monica.

Exploring Stewardship Strategies for Economic & Community Sustainability Through Heritage Sites. Nonprofit managers share best practices in financial planning, programming, marketing, board development, and volunteer cultivation.

The Power of Partnerships, Place, & Preservation at the Annenberg Beach House. The awardwinning project as case study of creating consensus with broad range of stakeholders, relating site to its cultural context, and developing innovative approaches to integrate preservation, conservation, and new construction.

Architectural Photography & Documentation for Preservation Professionals. Architectural photography techniques, HABS-level documentation, advanced photographic tools and techniques, and hands-on photographic session.

Breaking the Mold: Recreating Ornamental Architectural Details. Repairing and reconstructing architectural details and deteriorated ornamental elements with master and production molds. Life Members, continued

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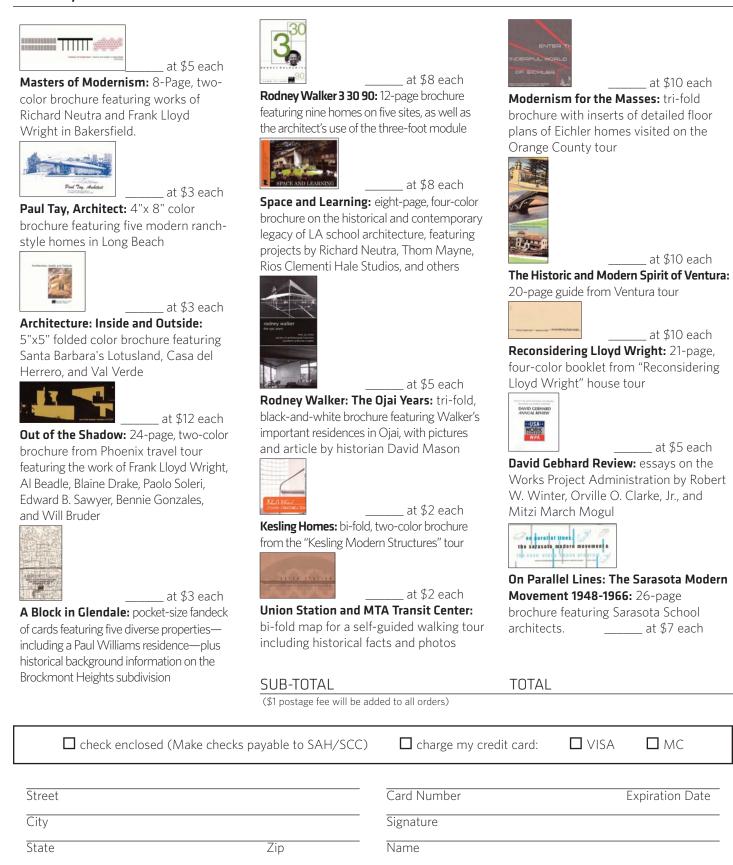
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Davies Guest House is part of Annenberg Beach House discussion. Photo: Stephen Schafer

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JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!

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!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Advance notice of all SAH/SCC events—important because they usually sell out just to members
- 20-30% discounts on tour and event ticket prices
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\$30 Student (requires scan of valid Student ID) - All the benefits of Individual membership at a 30% discount.

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