

**ATTACHMENT C:
Multiple Property Submission**

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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Section E Page 1

Summary Statement

This Multiple Property Submission addresses architecture in the City of Pasadena in two contexts, “Residential Architecture of the Recent Past in Pasadena, 1935- 1968,” and “Mid-Century Modernism in the Residential Work of Buff, Straub & Hensman¹ in Pasadena, 1948-1968.” These houses express qualities and features emerging from their shared period of significance and their geographical location in Pasadena. They reflect an architectural response to the unique circumstances, opportunities, and challenges of a 20th century, post-World War II world.

Context 1: Residential Architecture of the Recent Past in Pasadena, 1935 – 1968

Early History

Pasadena was initially a simple agricultural community, known for its bucolic weather and ample citrus groves. That would rapidly change as the railways came west and word of the opportunities in Southern California spread. Pasadena incorporated as a city in 1886, the same year the Santa Fe Line was completed, sparking the region’s first land boom. Many people from points east, but primarily Midwesterners, traveled to Southern California for the winter to escape the harsh climate back home. In 1900, an estimated 60,000 seasonal tourists enjoyed the mild West Coast winter. By this time, traveling to California had become what the grand European tour had been for Eastern seaboard residents in previous centuries.²

Many of these travelers found themselves in Pasadena, as its proximity to the railroad lines made it a natural destination for both seasonal tourists and permanent settlers alike. By the 1880s the community had changed from a small town to a thriving resort. The Tournament of Roses celebration, envisioned by early civic leaders as an opportunity to promote tourism and the warm winter climate, drew thousands of visitors to the West Coast. The tradition started in 1890 and evolved over time to include various activities, including the first football game in 1902. By 1920, the game had gained such prestige that organizers knew they needed a permanent home, and settled on a City-owned site in the Arroyo Seco for their new stadium, the Rose Bowl.

In addition to the seasonal tourists, the permanent population grew exponentially during this period as well. The proliferation of local rail and electric trolley lines built by moguls such as Henry Huntington enabled people to settle away from the urban centers and attain the American dream of a small house and a garden to call their own. As Pasadena’s population expanded, so did the commercial district along Fair Oaks Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. The heart of this bustling commercial center is known today as the Old Pasadena Historic District, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The earliest residences in Pasadena were simple board and batten structures or unadorned farm houses like those the Midwestern settlers had left behind. As Pasadena grew and turned from agriculture to commerce, area merchants began building more sophisticated residences, boasting fancy detailing and more complicated floor plans. In the late 1880s, mansions for prominent Pasadena citizens started to dominate the landscape. By the turn of the 20th century, South Orange Grove Boulevard had been dubbed “Millionaires’ Row” for its abundance of grand residences lining the street. While many of these mansions were designed by prominent architects working in the city, most Victorian-era homes were built by contractors utilizing catalogues for design ideas and mass produced architectural details.

¹ Buff, Straub & Hensman is the firm’s title; historically it has always used the ampersand.

² McWilliams, Carey. 1973. *Southern California: An Island on the Land*. Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith Press, p. 130.

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Arts & Crafts Movement in Pasadena

In addition to wealthy Midwesterners who settled Pasadena's "Millionaires' Row," Pasadena's middle and working class grew, in part to serve the needs of the affluent. The rugged nature of the frontier also attracted a creative, entrepreneurial, and artistic population which was captivated by the progressive ideals of California. In turn-of-the-20th-century Pasadena, these rugged individualists rejected the excesses of Victoriana, and instead chose to make their homes on the edge of the wilderness on the banks of the Arroyo Seco. At the same time, the anti-industrial ideals that John Ruskin and William Morris had promoted in England were taking root in the United States. In 1901, Gustav Stickley began publishing *Craftsman Magazine* in New York, and the principles of handcraft, connecting with nature, and the return to a simple life, which first took hold in the industrialized cities in the East, were embraced in the West.

These ideas held great appeal for the group of artists and artisans who made their homes along the Arroyo Seco. In combination with an appreciation for the indigenous cultures and local materials of the region, this philosophy shaped the Southern California adaptation of the Arts and Crafts movement, and with it, the creation of the Craftsman bungalow, also known as the "California" bungalow. The Craftsman bungalow was a simple, garden-oriented house uniquely suited for the climate and lifestyle of the area. It often embraced elements from the region's Spanish-Mexican heritage as well as the importance of connecting with the outdoors. Natural materials were important to the design aesthetic, with oak floors, exposed ceiling beams, and brick or stone fireplaces featured prominently. The exteriors were generally simple, to fit with the lifestyle of the inhabitants. Broad, gently-pitched roofs with wide, overhanging eaves emphasized the horizontality of the small bungalow, and were practical in shading the house from the hot California sun. Brick or arroyo stone foundations supported the wood frames, which were clad either in wood shingles or stucco, and heavy supports define the deeply recessed front porch.

Though there were many important local contributors to the Arts and Crafts movement, it is impossible to discuss the architecture of Pasadena during that era without noting the work of Charles and Henry Greene, who compare to Bernard Maybeck in San Francisco and Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago as the premier architects of the American Arts and Crafts movement. The Greene brothers came to Pasadena from apprenticeships in Boston in 1893, and took the simple California bungalow to the level of high art, with Pasadena's 1907 Blacker House and 1908 Gamble House as the definitive examples of their design aesthetic.

American Arts and Crafts enthusiasts also welcomed the use of new technology in creating the ideal living environment. The most prominent example is Frank Lloyd Wright, who famously declared in a lecture in 1901: "In the machine lies the only future of art and craft."³ The connection between the Arts and Crafts movement and industrialization became inextricably bound when Henry Ford began mass producing the Model T in 1908. Charles Greene wrote in 1915, "...[B]etween the automobile mania and the bungalow bias, there seems to be a psychic affinity...They have developed side by side at the same time, and they seem to be the expression of the same need or desire, to be free from the commonplace of convention."⁴

Other scholars agree with Charles' observation, giving equal credit to the simple house in the garden and the automobile for shaping Los Angeles in the early 20th century.⁵ Even in Pasadena, where outspoken activists along the Arroyo vigorously promoted a rugged lifestyle, the automobile flourished. By 1915 Pasadena had more automobiles per capita than any other city in the world – one automobile for every four residents, versus the national average of one automobile for every 43 citizens.⁶

³ Wright, Frank Lloyd. 1901. *The Art and Craft of the Machine*. Lecture to the Chicago chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; published 1941 as "The Art and Craft of the Machine" in *Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture: Selected Writings (1894–1940)*. Frederick Gutheim, ed. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

⁴ Greene, Charles Sumner. 1915. "Impressions of Some Bungalows and Gardens." In *The Architect*, Vol. 10. December, p. 252.

⁵ Kaplan, Sam Hall. 1987. *L.A. Lost and Found: An Architectural History of Los Angeles*. New York: Crown, p. 53.

⁶ Scheid, Ann. 1986. *Crown of the Valley*. Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, p. 117.

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Colorado Boulevard was also one of the first and largest “Automobile Rows” in Southern California, with car dealers stretching for over one hundred blocks.⁷

The Craftsman bungalow led to an innovative solution for higher density housing for Southern California’s growing middle class: the bungalow court. The permanent population of Southern California nearly doubled in every decade from 1880 to 1930,⁸ creating a shortage of housing for the middle class. A solution was found in the bungalow court, a concept originated in Pasadena “in response to ideal as well as pragmatic demands about the nature of the house, housing, and the city.”⁹

The bungalow court was a direct offshoot of the California bungalow tradition – a regionally suitable, moderately priced, and carefully designed domestic architecture. The bungalow court was a unique compromise for high density housing, bringing together the amenities of privacy and open space usually reserved for single family living with the convenience of an apartment. With front porches and common areas to encourage socializing among the residents, bungalow courts also helped provide new residents with a sense of identity and place.

The first bungalow court was Pasadena’s St. Francis Court, designed by Sylvanus Marston in 1908 as tourist housing. Marston’s concept, however, was quickly adapted by other developers as a new and lucrative form of permanent housing. According to a study of bungalow courts undertaken by the City of Pasadena, there were 414 courts constructed there between 1909 and 1933, which could accommodate over 6,500 residents.¹⁰

The bungalow court housing type soon spread throughout Southern California, and was also adapted into a new architecture to accommodate the growing numbers of automobile tourists. Pasadena architect Arthur Heineman, who had designed a number of bungalow courts and frequently traveled to northern California by car, observed the need for improved accommodations for roadside travelers. In 1925 he merged these two influences and opened the first motel in San Luis Obispo. The name “motel” was also coined by Heineman as a combination of the terms motor and hotel. His Milestone Motel featured a series of small bungalows in a u-shape around a central courtyard. The initial concept was for a series of eighteen Milestone Motels from San Diego to Seattle, spaced to be about one day’s drive between each one. Cost overruns and the Depression prevented Heineman’s plan from coming to fruition, but his idea had a long-lasting impact.

At the height of the Arts and Crafts era in Pasadena, the City undertook a bold experiment that resulted in an unprecedented feat of engineering. To create a strong connection to Los Angeles, accommodate the growing number of automobile travelers, and open up the west bank of the Arroyo for housing development, the City raised funds to build a bridge across the Arroyo Seco. New technologies allowed for the development of thoroughfares through previously impassable areas of the Arroyo Seco. The City of Los Angeles was a partner in this endeavor, and the resulting Colorado Street Bridge, completed in 1913, gracefully and effectively linked the east and west side of the Arroyo for the first time. Additional bridges were constructed in the 1920s due to continuously increasing automobile traffic, including the San Rafael Bridge and the Holly Street Bridge.

In Pasadena, Modernism was informed by the Arts and Crafts Movement, which was so firmly rooted in the city’s history. Architectural historian Robert Winter described Pasadena’s postwar architects as the “heirs of the ‘woody’ Arts and Crafts tradition.”¹¹ The local modern aesthetic used a more organic palette, which included wood framing and the use of natural

⁷ Grimes, Teresa. 1996. Early Auto-Related Properties in Pasadena, California. National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Submissions documentation form, January 2.

⁸ McWilliams, Carey. 1973. *Southern California: An Island on the Land*. Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith Press, p. 113.

⁹ Polyzoides, Stephanos; Roger Sherwood; James Tice; and Julius Shulman. 1992. *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles: A Typological Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Pasadena Star-News*. 1993. “This is, Truly, City of Homes.” July 13.

¹¹ *Toward a Simpler Way of Life*. 1997. Robert Winter, ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 243.

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materials instead of the steel and cool geometry of other Modern structures. The Modernist houses of Pasadena are characterized by thoughtful design, attention to detail, the use of built-in furniture and a visual connection between indoor and outdoor space.

Early Modernism

After the First World War, while California's regional architecture was swept up in Bertram Goodhue's romanticized version of the past, the seeds of 20th century Modernism were beginning to spread. The International Style – an architectural aesthetic that stressed rationality, logic, and a break with the past – emerged in Europe in the 1920s with the work of Le Corbusier in France, and Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in Germany, where the Bauhaus School trained a future generation of Modern architects. For these early 20th-century Modernists, the machine was “the great vehicle of aesthetic transformation not only for its suggestion of cleanliness and efficiency, but also for the new materials and techniques it introduced,”¹² including steel, glass, and concrete. Their buildings were minimalist in concept, stressed functionalism, and were devoid of regional characteristics and nonessential decorative elements. They were working to establish a new architectural style that was reflective of the Modern era.

In 1932, New York's Museum of Modern Art hosted an architecture exhibition curated by Henry Russell-Hitchcock and Philip Johnson entitled “The International Style: Architecture Since 1922.” The accompanying publication was the first to name and define the style, introducing the American public to the new European approach to design and highlighting its major practitioners. This helped promote the style, which was critical to the development of Modernism before World War II. The Nazis closed the Bauhaus in 1933, and Gropius and Mies van der Rohe fled to the United States, by which time they had both established international reputations as pioneers of Modern architecture. Mies taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and Gropius at the Harvard School of Design. This meant that the tenets of International Style Modernism were now being promoted in the United States by two of its leaders.

The early impact of the International Style in the United States was primarily in the field of residential design. In contrast, it was the Art Deco or Moderne style that was the first European architectural development to have an impact on American commercial architecture. Art Deco was popularized by the Paris *Exposition des Arts Decoratif* in 1925 and featured exuberant forms and ornamentation. The exposition immediately influenced many American patrons and architects who desired a modern design that was not as austere as the Modernism developed by the Bauhaus school or Le Corbusier. The Streamline version of the style, which is seen in the 1930s and 1940s, emphasized curving forms, long horizontal lines, and less exaggerated detailing.

During this period, Los Angeles in particular had an interesting architectural climate, and is a case study in how varying ideas can come together and inform each other. Preservationist and author Paul Gleye describes the unique circumstances in Southern California:

The story of the architectural transformation into Modernism has been told at great length, but a part of that story not so well known is the role of Southern California. The architectural exuberance of Los Angeles, which first imported the Queen Anne from the East in the 1880s and nurtured the Mission Revival and Craftsman styles in the following decades, simultaneously supported many architectural ethics. The freedom to build as one wished, particularly in the form of single family homes which depended little on the context of the street or neighborhood, allowed revolutionary architects to flourish in the fringes of accepted styles. The resulting experimentation in Modern idioms would make Los Angeles a showcase of international significance in Modern architecture by the 1930s.¹³

¹² Gleye, Paul. 1981. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, p. 137.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

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The primary American practitioners of International Style architecture were Viennese-born architects Richard Neutra and Rudolph M. Schindler. Schindler's Kings Road House (1921) and Neutra's Lovell "Health" House (1929), both in Los Angeles, are considered two of the seminal examples of the style in the United States. Other architects who were influential in Southern California during this period include Frank Lloyd Wright, Irving Gill, Harwell Hamilton Harris, and Gregory Ain, who is considered the first local architect to join Neutra and Schindler in designing in the Modern idiom in Los Angeles.¹⁴

Frank Lloyd Wright came to California in 1917, and in the 1920s created his "textile block" houses that experimented with a democratic, regional architecture. The first of these houses was the 1923 Millard House in Pasadena. The Millard House was constructed of blocks cast from concrete mixed with aggregate from the site, in keeping with Wright's notion of organic architecture in which the house "grew" out of the land. It was also meant to fit into the landscape and reflect the climate in California.

The work of Harwell Hamilton Harris was a critical link between early Modernism influenced by Richard Neutra and the European movement, and a regional Modern aesthetic in the tradition of Greene and Greene. Harris worked for Neutra in the 1920s, while construction of the Lovell "Health" House was underway before starting his own practice in 1934. The following year he designed the Laing House at 1642 Pleasant Way, which has been called "simplified Wright."¹⁵

Harris was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's original forms and inventions, as well as the idea of the house as part of nature. It was Harris' wife, historian Jean Murray Bangs, who would formally introduce him to the work of Greene and Greene. Bangs was one of the first scholars to recognize the work of Greene and Greene and helped return them to the California consciousness.¹⁶ His work of the 1940s embraced the local traditions of a wood house that blended with nature, and helped influence the next generation of California Modernists. According to architect Ray Kappe, it was the work of Harris that "established a basis for a common ground of thinking."¹⁷

The influence of these early Modernists would not take root until the 1940s, however. The economic downturn of the Depression, from which the country was still recovering in the early 1940s, followed by the impact of World War II meant that there was little architectural development during this period. During the war much of the nation's resources were devoted to the war effort, and in fact, the Federal Housing Administration decreed that due to the scarcity of materials, only temporary housing could be constructed during the war.¹⁸ Therefore, it was in the exuberant, optimistic postwar period that Americans embraced Modernism, and its full impact on the architectural landscape was felt.

World War II

The United States' entrance into World War II effectively ended the Depression in California and boosted the regional economy. California received almost 12% of the government war contracts and produced 17% of all war supplies.¹⁹ California also acquired more military installations than any other state by a wide margin, and military bases were opened throughout the state. Aircraft, shipbuilding, and numerous other industries were booming due to the war effort, and unemployment was virtually eliminated.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁵ Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter. 1994. *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide*. Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith, p. 375.

¹⁶ Hess, Alan. 2004. *The Ranch House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., p. 35.

¹⁷ Kappe, Ray. n.d. "Regionalism: Climate, Site, and Materials." Source undocumented. Pasadena Heritage files.

¹⁸ Hines, Thomas. 1989. "Case Study Trouvé: Sources and Precedents Southern California 1920-1942." In *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Homes*. Elizabeth Smith, ed. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, p. 96.

¹⁹ California Military Museum. n.d. California military history online. Available: <<http://www.militarymuseum.org/HistoryWWII.html>>. Accessed: August 2007.

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Pasadena's booming tourist economy, which was interrupted by the Depression, saw its remaining resort-era hotels co-opted for military purposes during the war. The Huntington Hotel was used as the headquarters of the Army's 35th Division and the Office of Civilian Defense for Southern California. The Vista del Arroyo Hotel was purchased by the army and converted to a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. Pasadena also became a center for industrial research and manufacturing of scientific instruments, and by 1954 there were 394 industrial establishments in the city.²⁰

Important atomic research and missile testing was also conducted in Pasadena during the war, particularly through the work of scientists at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

Pasadena's Caltech had become an internationally recognized research institute during the 1920s, a reputation that continued under President Robert Millikan's leadership through World War II. Millikan was particularly interested in physics, and worked diligently to increase funding and recognition for the program. He also invited Albert Einstein to spend three winters there in the early 1930s, which was a large promotional boost for the school. By 1937, Caltech was the leading center of aeronautical research and teaching in the United States, setting the stage for its influential role during World War II.²¹

In 1926, Millikan started an aeronautics department at the school, which began experimenting with rocket propulsion in the 1930s. Initially funded and housed by Caltech's Guggenheim Laboratory, the jet propulsion experiments eventually were moved off campus, and researchers leased seven acres of land from the City of Pasadena in the upper Arroyo Seco. In 1943, the name Jet Propulsion Laboratory was used for the first time, and the researchers entered into a \$5 million contract with the army to develop a guided missile. During the war, Caltech was an educational institution in name only, as all of its resources were directed to the war effort, with \$80 million in Federal funding for war-related research and development.²² Military research continued at JPL after the conclusion of the war, and in 1958 it became a research facility for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The Depression and war effort also resulted in the quest for low-cost housing, initially addressing those wildly affected by the difficulty of the economy, and later, particularly addressing the returning veteran and the nuclear family. Architects who matured in the late 1920s and 1930s were particularly interested in architecture as a cure for social problems, and many were acutely interested in solving the crisis of sanitary, affordable, and attractive low-cost housing.²³ While architects both in Europe and in America sought solutions to these problems, architects also addressed these problems regionally and locally. In 1935, the Better Housing Bureau of Pasadena, chaired by Cyril Bennett, sponsored a contest to build a small, low-cost model home. The winner was local architect Theodore Pletsch, whose design was constructed on the corner of Garfield and Holly Streets, across from City Hall. A ten cent fee bought you admission to the house and entry into a raffle to win ownership of the home at the close of the exhibition. After the war, local architect Whitney Smith participated in the same program with his own design for a small, affordable house.

As Esther McCoy states, "when practice wanes, theory flourishes,"²⁴ so work on low-cost housing solutions continued during the war. Gregory Ain is best known in California for his work in this arena. In 1940, Ain received a Guggenheim fellowship to research structural systems that would cut costs and speed construction.²⁵ Ain emphasized low-maintenance homes that would appeal to women running households devoid of help from servants. Ain's ideas were similar to those explored in the Case Study

²⁰ City of Pasadena. n.d. Heritage: A Short Story of Pasadena, 1930–1950. Available: <<http://www.cityofpasadena.net/History/1930-1950.asp>>. Accessed: August 2007.

²¹ Starr, Kevin. 2002. *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace 1940–1950*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 133.

²² Goodstein, Judith. 1998. History of Caltech. Available: <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/physics/articles/goodstein>. Accessed: August 2007.

²³ McCoy, Esther. n.d. "Arts and Architecture, Case Study Houses." Elizabeth Smith, ed. In, *Blueprints for Modern Living*, p. 16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁵ McCoy, Esther. 1955. "What I Believe." *Los Angeles Times*. January 2.

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Program, and to many scholars it is surprising that he was not invited to participate. His work during the Depression, and his efforts to create defense worker housing during the war indicate that his talents would have greatly enhanced John Entenza's ambitious program.²⁶ Instead, Ain directed his efforts at a variety of projects that were realized in the postwar era, locally in Altadena's Park Planned Homes of 1946.

Other architects were experimenting with their own low cost housing concepts. For example, Harwell Hamilton Harris' early commissions were also small homes that combined the ideas he learned from working for Neutra and Schindler with a modular construction system. In 1946, Harris developed a solar house for the Libbey-Owens-Ford glass company.

Wallace Neff, best known for his sophisticated designs for wealthy clients during the 1920s and 1930s, also had a life-long interest in low cost housing. In 1941, Neff developed the Bubble (or "Airform") House, which was his direct response to the shortage of traditional building materials during the war, as well as the need for innovative and inexpensive housing for defense workers.²⁷ When Neff's Airform House debuted in Falls Church, Virginia, to house defense workers, over 5,000 people lined up to view the house, causing traffic jams for miles. In 1946, Neff built an Airform House in Pasadena for his brother Andrew, which is likely the last remaining example of this housing type in the United States.

This experimental work did produce some tangible ideas that would become influential in the development of residential architecture after World War II. The discovery that a good house could be made of inexpensive materials, that outdoor living was important to quality of life, and that formal spaces such as separate dining rooms are expendable when space is limited, all became integral components of postwar, middle class housing.²⁸

Along with these experiments, the Federal government's initiatives in the 1930s and 1940s to encourage home ownership also influenced the design of modest housing after the war. The National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which helped reignite the construction of single family homes by establishing mortgage terms that were conducive to the average American family and would regulate the interest rates and terms of interest that had ballooned out of control in the aftermath of the stock market crash. During the 1940s, FHA programs also helped finance military housing and homes needed for returning veterans. In 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, more commonly known as the GI Bill, also helped military families attain the dream of home ownership.

While the FHA rose to prominence because of these financial incentives, they also influenced how homes and neighborhoods were designed. In particular, FHA guidelines promoted a 624-square-foot dwelling type termed the basic plan or minimum house: "In the design of small, low-priced houses, the principles of efficiency, economic use of materials, and proper equipment, which are important in any class of dwellings, become paramount."²⁹

To satisfy functional and spatial requirements, FHA design staff organized the house in a side-by-side arrangement. A small hall served as the pivot for this plan type. The private spaces, two bedrooms and a bath, opened off the hall. Opposite this was a public zone with living room and kitchen. These contained a major and minor entry respectively...The kitchens were small, planned for efficiency, and stocked with up-to-date

²⁶ Hines, Thomas. 1989. "Case Study Trouvé: Sources and Precedents Southern California 1920–1942." In *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Homes*. Elizabeth Smith, ed. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, p. 101.

²⁷ The execution of Airform construction was quick and simple. After pouring a concrete foundation, a rubber-coated balloon was tied to the concrete footings, inflated, and then sprayed with gunite. After the gunite set and was able to support itself, the balloon was deflated and removed through a door or window (and then saved for reuse). The house was then covered with a strong wire mesh, insulated, and covered with another layer of concrete.

²⁸ McCoy, Esther. n.d. "Arts and Architecture, Case Study Houses." Elizabeth Smith, ed. In *Blueprints for Modern Living*, p. 16.

²⁹ Hise, Greg. 1997. *Magnetic Los Angeles*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 68.

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*appliances. A utility room with an integrated mechanical system replaced the basement heating plant and coal storage.*³⁰

As early as 1936, the FHA embraced the principles of modern community planning, advocating for well-designed comprehensive communities at the neighborhood scale. This development model would become the standard approach for the rapid development of the suburbs after the war. The FHA published a series of informational pamphlets to help spread these ideas and to inform land developers and speculative builders of the economic advantages of good planning in the creation and maintenance of real estate values. These pamphlets also outlined concepts of proper street patterns, planning for parks, playgrounds, and commercial areas, and recommended a buffer zone of multifamily dwellings and commercial buildings between major arterials and minor interior streets.”³¹

Of course none of these new ideas would have a meaningful impact until after the war ended and attention could be refocused on life in the United States. Architects who had been idle during the war were bursting with ideas and eager to usher in a new era in American life. The exuberance and optimism from the war victory, the population explosion, and the creation of the automobile-centric suburbia in the building boom that followed meant great changes for the way Americans lived. Southern California was at the core of this new era, and its tradition of experimentation in architecture placed it in an ideal position to lead the exploration of suburban residential architecture after World War II.

Pasadena in the Postwar Era

Following the conclusion of World War II, Southern California experienced a period of unprecedented growth, as many who came west to participate in the war effort, including former military personnel, decided to settle permanently. Between 1940 and 1950 California’s population increased by 53%, which was partially accounted for by the 850,000 veterans who took up residence after the war.³² This surge in population also impacted Pasadena, whose population grew from just over 81,000 in 1940 to 106,000 by the close of the decade.³³ California struggled to accommodate the influx of new residents, and in 1948, Governor Earl Warren stated:

*The stampede has visited us with unprecedented civic problems, partly because we did not expect to digest so much population in so short a time, and partly because even if we had been forewarned, we could have done little to prepare for the shock during the stringent war years. So we have an appalling housing shortage, our schools are packed to suffocation, and our highways are inadequate and dangerous.*³⁴

The resulting building boom that began immediately after the War transformed how Californians lived and had an immediate and irrevocable impact on the architectural landscape. Highway improvements, mass construction of new single family residences, and the creation of new civic and public buildings such as churches, schools, post offices, and fire stations to serve the growing population began in earnest.

For these new buildings, architects largely abandoned historical precedents in favor of the modern styles that had first emerged in the pre-war years.³⁵ This new generation of architects combined a concern for landscape and site relationships, the use of natural materials, and innovative building technologies to create a new regional architecture. This was also a period of exuberance and

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 68–69.

³¹ Ibid., p. 34.

³² Starr, Kevin. 2002. *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace 1940–1950*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 193–194.

³³ City of Pasadena. n.d. Pasadena Census and Population. City of Pasadena web site.

³⁴ Warren, Earl. 1948. “California’s Biggest Headache.” *Saturday Evening Post*. August 7, p. 20. Quoted in Starr, Kevin. 2002. *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace 1940–1950*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 194.

³⁵ McAlister, Virginia and Lee. 2004. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 477.

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optimism that was directly reflected in the architecture. According to historian Kevin Starr, the theory that domestic architecture would not take up where it had left off before the war was fundamental.³⁶

Ranch House and the Growth of Suburbia

The Ranch House³⁷

The Ranch House is a twentieth century invention. Though its imagery often evokes historic nineteenth century California styles such as the board and batten or adobe walls of vernacular nineteenth century ranch buildings and Spanish-era haciendas, the ranch is Modern because it responded to the development and lifestyle of modern suburbia which the automobile permitted; to the mid-century economy which encouraged single family homes; to the family-oriented leisure-oriented indoor-outdoor lifestyle those homes allowed; to the appealing images of Western cowboy life spread through the media of movies and television, and to many technological building innovations that allowed an open floor plan and mass produced housing.

The Ranch House refers to a one-story, single family house with an open floor plan, and a close relationship to its yard, as manifested between 1930 and 1980. Informal in composition, it included many of the same spatial and structural tendencies seen in other Modern residential architecture of the period, though in a more moderate manner. It almost always included a garage to house the modern family's automobile.

The Ranch House is connected to many trends in California architecture since 1900. One is the evolution of a regional architecture, and the other is the development of mass production for houses. California played a major role in its creation, beginning before World War II. Throughout the greater Los Angeles region, the Ranch House is intimately associated with the development of suburbia after 1945. The Ranch style is seen in many Custom home designs, often by name architects. However, throughout the greater Los Angeles region the style was more commonly employed as pre-designed units in large subdivisions.

The Ranch continued many of the elements of the earlier Craftsman bungalows, c. 1900: rustic, unpretentious structures, natural materials and easy access to the out of doors. By the 1920s, several California and Texas architects had become interested both in Modern architecture and in regional architecture, including rustic ranch buildings and Spanish era adobe structures; this was part of a national trend reflecting renewed interest in our national history and Colonial architecture-- most notably evidenced in the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in the late 1920s. As author and historian Paul Gleye has similarly noted:

*Post-and-Beam architecture was unflinchingly Modern, but it had its roots in the open plan of Japanese architecture and the horizontality of the Craftsman bungalow. It influenced, in turn, a whole generation of developer-built homes called the California Ranch House, with their low, and rambling open plan, natural wood, glass sliding doors leading to the patio, and flat or shallow-pitched roof.*³⁸

In Northern California, architect William Wurster and others used that region's vernacular wooden buildings as sources for house designs; Wurster's Gregory Ranch, 1928, in Santa Cruz was widely publicized in professional and popular magazines. In Southern California, architects such as Palmer Sabin, Wallace Neff, Roland Coate, and others had adapted the adobe style of the region's Spanish architecture. By the early 1930s, Cliff May also began designing and popularizing these early Ranch Houses in Southern California. Cliff May is credited with reintroducing the Ranch house in the 1930s, and is the architect most closely associated with the style on the West Coast; his obituary in the *Los Angeles Times* was published under the headline "Home

³⁶ Starr, Kevin. 1989. "The Case Study House Program and the Impending Future: Some Regional Considerations." Elizabeth Smith, ed. In, *Blueprints for Modern Living*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. 131.

³⁷ The first portion of this section is based on work done for SurveyLA! By ICF Jones & Stokes Architectural Historian John English and Alan Hess, consulting Architectural Historian.

³⁸ Gleye, Paul. 1981. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, pp. 146–147. Quoted previously on p. 9 and used here again in this more specific explication of the Ranch.

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Designer Perfected the Ranch Style.”³⁹ Although May’s early Ranch houses were picturesque, with the “air of a movie set,”⁴⁰ after the war his work changed to respond to the times, and took on the modern characteristics of post-and-beam construction. The Henry May House, built in 1954 for May’s brother, is one of only two examples of Cliff May’s work in Pasadena, but his influence was far-reaching in Pasadena and throughout Southern California. In 1958, May published a book of his designs in conjunction with *Sunset* magazine called *Western Ranch House* which had widespread influence. By the end of the decade, Paul R. Williams, Sumner Spaulding, Lulah Maria Riggs, and almost every other notable Southern California architect included Ranch as one of the styles offered to clients. The Ranch had become a well-established choice for those who could afford custom homes. In Los Angeles, upscale communities such as Sherman Oaks and Encino featured Ranch houses.

The second major trend that helped to establish the success of the Ranch House was both social and technological. The Great Depression had suppressed home construction, but by 1939 the increased need for housing was evident. Los Angeles region developers Fritz Burns and Fred Marlow, and San Francisco Bay Area developer David Bohannon, experimented with methods of building affordable houses by the hundreds. Before World War II Marlow-Burns developed means of subdividing lots and the building of mass produced houses on a large scale in the Los Angeles communities of Westchester, and in Toluca Woods. The beginning of World War II and the demand for defense industry housing allowed Marlow-Burns, Bohannon and other home builders to apply and perfect their building methods. At the end of the war, these techniques became common industry practice, and helped to launch the development of large scale subdivisions in Los Angeles, and particularly the San Fernando Valley. These techniques led to standardization, but the housing market also demanded variety, especially in middle-income and upscale tracts. In Pasadena, Fritz Burns and Fred Marlow, along with Harrison Baker subdivided Pasadena’s best known example of the large scale Ranch tract: Upper Hastings Ranch. Upper Hastings Ranch was an 800 home subdivision developed in 1951 by Coronet Homes, with houses designed by Edward Fickett, who is responsible for over 60,000 homes throughout the Southern California region and beyond. Upper Hastings Ranch was but one component of Hastings Ranch. Hastings Ranch is a section of northeast Pasadena that also consisted of the 600-house Lower Hastings Ranch subdivision just south of Sierra Madre Boulevard. Lower Hastings Ranch was constructed between 1948 and 1954.

The many small homes which consisted of most of the region’s larger-scale tracts were influenced by FHA standards to qualify for government loans, and adopted the Minimal Ranch house as an appealing product for the public. The term “Minimal Ranch” references a standard design house, often with the stucco cladding, compact footprint and taller, square profile of the Minimal Traditional house, but with applied ornament such as dovecotes, diamond shaped glazing, decorative shutters that would be associated with the California Ranch style. Minimal Ranch is seen as a transitional design between the Minimal Traditional style and the lower pitched, rambling and rusticated California Ranch style itself.

The Ranch House proved to be a highly appealing consumer product. The popularity of Western movies and television programs in the 1940s and 1950s helped to create the positive image of the style: it implied rugged individualism, a close tie to nature, and unpretentious, informal friendliness. Ranch architecture is significant as a prime expression of “California Living”: an idealized existence which is casual, rustic, independent and integrated into nature and the outdoors: a California tradition that goes back to the region’s earliest settlers and the *Ranchos* in which they lived. The California Ranch, which is also called “Traditional Ranch,” proved one of the most popular styles between 1945 and 1970.

Despite the success of the California Ranch style both in the state and beyond, the slightly later Contemporary Ranch style which reflected the abstract forms of Modern architecture also proved popular as a variation. As the Ranch style evolved away from California Ranch tract housing, Contemporary Ranch represented a second wave of the Ranch style of cleaner lines, greater abstraction, and themes more sophisticated than those associated with the frontier West. Contemporary Ranch homes are Ranch houses for the discerning buyer, and often included an entirely different set of signifiers and amenities from previous Ranch sub-

³⁹ “Cliff May.” *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1989.

⁴⁰ Hess, *The Ranch House*. (34)

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types. The antecedents of Contemporary Ranch were in Modernism, including the Case Study House program. From it, the Contemporary Ranch adopts the clean lines, generous use of glass and post and beam aesthetics into the rambling, pitched roof Ranch house building form.⁴¹

The concepts, ideas and sometimes decorative elements of Asiatic architecture informed Modernism and hence the Contemporary Ranch style itself. Frank Lloyd Wright, Greene & Greene, Richard Neutra, and Harwell Hamilton Harris were forthright and architecturally expressive about their Asiatic and specifically Japanese influences. The Southern California work of these architects advocated designs that acknowledged, if not integrated with nature and the benevolent climate of the region. The Contemporary Ranch style, as a California phenomenon, continues the same tendency of wanting an integrated, if not organic relationship to a given building's immediate surroundings. This is a Japanese idea as well, and had been for hundreds of years before the advent of Modernism. Modernism and Japanese design have much overlap, such as standardization, variety in unity, conformity to a mode of living, and usefulness to purpose.⁴² Both traditional Japanese architecture and Modernism also explore non-load bearing walls, a lack of traditional ornament, and open plans, among other features.

For the middle or upper-middle class buyer, more as applied decoration than as concept, such Asiatic themes represented maturity, taste and sophistication. With regard to Asiatic themes, in 1940 Harwell Hamilton Harris designed a restaurant in Los Angeles' Chinatown called Grandview Gardens, which was ranch-like in its low-slung horizontality and featured latticed screens, a bouldered landscape, and other Asiatic decorations. Though the Los Angeles region featured specific examples of the convergence of Asiatic with Modern, in décor and in concept, one exhibit in New York City appears to have had an important impact upon Contemporary Ranch imagery of the late 1950s through the 1960s as it would pertain to the masses. The Ranch style, in any subtype, had rarely expressed Asiatic themes before.

In the summers of 1954 and 1955, the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented the "Japanese Exhibition House," a *shoin-zukuri* style temple built within the Museum's Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture garden.⁴³ The idea for such an exhibit was originally that of Philip Johnson, the Museum's Assistant Curator (who had also co-curated the MOMA *International Style* exhibit in 1932), and John D. Rockefeller, Museum Trustee and President of the Japan Society of New York. The co-sponsorship and unified effort of the United States and Japan toward funding and producing the exhibition house and its adjacent garden was seen as a strong step toward healing relations that had been battered as a result of World War II. Additionally, it was acknowledged that various architects practicing in America and indeed Southern California were already appropriating ideas from Japanese Architecture, with which the Ranch style already had a fair amount in common. Both advocated a strong relationship to the surrounding natural terrain; both employed natural materials onto exterior elevations; both exhibited a lack of ornament in the traditional sense. After 1955 Contemporary Ranch houses began to exhibit Asiatic motifs in a manner in which they had not done prior. Over 200,000 people visited the Japanese exhibition house over two years, and the house was subject of numerous national and international press reports. Aside from the desire to mend relations between the two countries and to explicitly demonstrate what Japanese architecture actually was, according to Philip Johnson, another intention of the Japanese Exhibition House was to help define "good taste" for the middle class.⁴⁴

The challenge of bringing good design to the average person's home preoccupied many architects, though few were able to work within the commercial restrictions of the building industry to build practically on a mass scale; one such example is the General

⁴¹ Historic Resources Group and Pasadena Heritage, Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Statement Report: City of Pasadena, Report. Hollywood, CA: Historic Resources Group, 2007: 63.

⁴² This specific list of features items that author Jiro Harada felt were "the Lessons Japanese Architecture for the Western World." Harada, Jiro, The Lesson of Japanese Architecture, New York: Dover Publications, 1936 (1985): 9.

⁴³ *Shoin-zukuri*: A development of the *buke* (Samurai class) style of architecture, also the room containing the *tokonoma* and its dependent features. Ibid., 192.

⁴⁴ Pogrebin, Robin, "Is Prefab Fab? MOMA Plans a Show," *New York Times*, 8 Jan 2008. Viewed online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/arts/design/08moma.html> 2 April 2008.

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Panel prefabricated system developed by Walter Gropius and Konrad Wachsmann. Nonetheless, some of the architects of mass produced housing were themselves Modernists. Edward Fickett and William Krisel (of Palmer and Krisel) were both educated at USC's School of Architecture, where they had been exposed to many of the leading Modern architects in the region. Fickett designed many Traditional Ranch tracts, but persuaded some of his builder clients to build in a contemporary style. Krisel and his partner, Dan Palmer (educated in Modernism at New York University) were also able to persuade a few clients to build Contemporary Ranch Houses. Both firms built over 20,000 units. Along with other architects working in the style (including Charles Dubois and Jones and Emmons), the Contemporary Ranch became a significant part of the housing stock in post-war Los Angeles. They have been most notably represented by the Eichler Homes developed by builder Joseph Eichler in the San Francisco Bay Area beginning in the late 1940s, and brought to Southern California in Granada Hills in the 1950s. However, the Contemporary Ranch House was already established in the region in both mass produced and custom home versions by then.

The "Custom Ranch" house simply refers to Ranch homes that were architect designed, either individually or as part of a tract. Unlike many other residential styles, it is imperative to acknowledge the Custom versions of the Ranch style. Most often its designs are associated with large, standardized tracts often with a builder but no architect listed. Rather than providing Custom homes, a primary intention of these tracts was to immediately house large numbers of families. Though Custom Ranch architecture incorporates style subtypes of Ranch such as Minimal, California, and most often Contemporary Ranch, Custom Ranch nonetheless has its own set of tendencies such as larger scale, decorative flourishes, and special living amenities, both inside and out. Additionally, Custom Ranch tracts and homes often present elaborated landscaping. Though the Custom Ranch home has been present since the beginnings of the Ranch style, its presence appears to have ascended from 1955 onward through the late-1970s. Particularly from the immediate post-war years through the mid-1960s, the national and regional economy was booming. For the greater Los Angeles region, this booming economy was due in no small part to the aerospace and high-tech industries of which Los Angeles was a global leader from the immediate postwar years through the 1970s. Homeowners, many with growing families, moved from a middle class to upper middle class existence and the Custom Ranch House expresses this transition.

The Case Study House Program

Southern California architecture in the postwar decades was distinguished by a wide range of modern design philosophies. The most widely publicized of these were those that reflected the concepts of the International Style, most notably through the Case Study House Program. The Case Study houses were a forward-looking series of built and unbuilt projects sponsored by the Los Angeles-based magazine *Arts and Architecture* and the brainchild of its editor, John Entenza. The program was conceived as a forum for experimentation in low-cost housing for middle-class families, in response to the post-war housing shortage. The program was romantic in its belief that societal ills could be cured by architecture, but it was also pragmatic in its approach to solving the postwar housing crisis.

With the Case Study House Program, Entenza's foremost goal was to create a good, affordable living environment. He wrote in 1945 that he hoped the Case Study program would be "general enough to be of practical assistance to the average American in search of a home in which he could afford to live."⁴⁵ He envisioned the Case Study houses as prototypes that could be easily replicated throughout the country. The Case Study House Program – and more specifically *Arts & Architecture* – brought Los Angeles and its Modern architects to the forefront of the profession. As historian Esther McCoy wrote, "A slim magazine with no outside financial backing became the greatest force in the dissemination of cultural information about California."⁴⁶

The houses used modular construction, industrial materials, rectilinear forms, glass curtain walls, open plans, and a blurring of the distinction between indoor and outdoor space. The demarcation between public and private spaces was clearly defined, with the living spaces oriented toward a central, private garden and shielded from the street. In many cases total environments were

⁴⁵ Entenza, John. 1945. *Arts & Architecture*. January.

⁴⁶ McCoy, Esther. 1977. *Case Study Houses*. Santa Monica, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, p. 3.

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created, bringing to prominence Modern furniture manufacturers and landscape architects, in addition to the architects. Landscaping combined dramatic plant materials that were also low maintenance by notable landscape designers such as Garrett Eckbo.

The Case Study House Program came to Pasadena in Case Study House #10 at 711 South San Rafael Avenue, by architects Kemper Nomland and Kemper Nomland, Jr. The house was published in *Arts and Architecture* in 1945 but constructed in 1947. It was designed specifically for the site, a sloping corner lot in the San Rafael hillside neighborhood of Pasadena. The structure is adapted to the contours of the site, with the rooms placed on several levels to accommodate the slope. The room identified as the “Studio Room” on the original plans exemplifies the connection with the outdoors that was so prevalent in Southern California architecture. There is a continuous slab from inside the house to the terrace, separated by a wall of glass that merges the indoor room with the surrounding landscape.⁴⁷

Although the Case Study program did not achieve the results originally intended by John Entenza – namely to create an affordable and reproducible architecture that would solve the postwar housing crisis – it was largely influential and resulted in the further development of the middle class, single family house. In Southern California, this meant the proliferation of post-and-beam construction, which included large expanses of glass, open floor plans, and mass-produced materials. These homes were relatively inexpensive and easy to build, and the extensive use of glass meant that the indoor-outdoor connection could be emphasized to a greater degree than in previous eras. According to author Paul Gleye, the Post-and-Beam (distinguished as a style with initial capital letters) house links the regional domestic designs that came before and after:

*Post-and-Beam architecture was unflinchingly Modern, but it had its roots in the open plan of Japanese architecture and the horizontality of the Craftsman bungalow. It influenced, in turn, a whole generation of developer-built homes called the California Ranch House, with their low, and rambling open plan, natural wood, glass sliding doors leading to the patio, and flat or shallow-pitched roof.*⁴⁸

Pasadena Style and the USC School of Architecture

The term “Pasadena” or “USC style” Modernism was coined by architectural historian Esther McCoy, and reflects the profound impact that graduates of the University of Southern California’s School of Architecture, many of whom lived and worked in Pasadena, had on the architectural landscape of the region. The Pasadena style reflects the unique combination of factors that contributed locally to the City’s postwar architecture, and is best summarized by historian Alson Clark:

*The postwar Pasadenans managed to combine, successfully, creatively, the post-and-beam rationalism which ultimately came from Neutra, the Arts-and-Crafts tradition of Wright and the Greenes, and the high standards of design and technique perpetuated here by architects like Myron Hunt, Reginald Johnson and Roland Coate into a fresh, convincing expression of residential architecture.*⁴⁹

USC was the first architecture school in Southern California, founded in 1916. It rose to prominence following World War II, led by Arthur B. Gallion who became Dean in 1945 and transformed the program. Gallion recruited notable local architects and landscape architects to teach design classes including A. Quincy Jones, Gregory Ain, Robert Alexander, Harwell Hamilton Harris, and Garret Eckbo. Carl Maston, Edward Killingsworth, Craig Elwood, Richard Neutra, and Pierre Koenig also lectured and taught design classes during the postwar years. Harris, for example, served as design critic at USC 1938 (after just completing the deSteiguer and Laing houses in southwest Pasadena and Poppy Peak, respectively) to 1943 and returned to USC in 1945.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ “Case Study House 10.” 1947. *Arts & Architecture*. October.

⁴⁸ Gleye, Paul. 1981. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, pp. 146–147.

⁴⁹ Clark, Alson. 1991. *The Golden Age of Modernism: Pasadena’s Contribution*. Unpublished. Pasadena Heritage.

⁵⁰ McCoy, Ester. 1984. *The Second Generation*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, Inc.

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Gallion also added a department of Industrial Design, which was headed by Raymond F. Loewy. During this period USC was much more than just the local architecture school; it was “the region’s flashpoint for the agile curiosity... [during] a heady, exhilarating time.”⁵¹ The circumstances in postwar Southern California provided these young, eager, and mutually supportive architects the opportunity to develop a new design direction and construction system that continues to influence architecture today.⁵² Though largely ignored in architectural history until recently, local Post-and-Beam architecture of the 1950s and early 1960s is “one of the major contributions of California to American architecture and lifestyles.”⁵³

Among the most influential architects in Pasadena during this period were the firms of Buff, Straub & Hensman;⁵⁴ Smith & Williams; Harold Zook, who worked in Palm Springs for modernist icon Albert Frey (who in turn had worked for Le Corbusier in Switzerland detailing the doors on the seminal 1929 Villa Savoye using the first Sweet’s Catalog) and Ladd & Kelsey. Leland Evison, USC and Art Center College of Design, designed several Mid-Century Modern houses in the Pasadena area; Evison had worked under Myron Hunt, famous American architect who designed several Pasadena landmarks.⁵⁵ Like Wallace Neff, in addition to upper-end custom houses, Evison developed prototypes of what would now be called “sustainable” dwellings: low-cost and affordable, seen in his post-and-beam “Evi-Sun” homes, which exploited no-cost daylight and plenty of storage.⁵⁶ Pasadena architects Conrad Buff (B.Arch. 1952), Calvin Straub (B.Arch. 1943), and Donald Hensman (B.Arch. 1952), studied and taught at USC under Gallion’s leadership, and through their prolific careers epitomized the “Pasadena style.” In Case Study Houses #20 and #28, the three explored how the principles of modernism responded to a regional context, heavily informed by the tradition of the preceding architectural philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Recalling his years at USC, Don Hensman joked that the school was “where we were ‘brainwashed’ in Post-and-Beam,”⁵⁷ so pervasive was its influence on his work. Also influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra, the architects visited the construction sites for Neutra’s houses to study his use of clean lines, large expanses of glass, and intersecting planes.

The Pasadena Modernism practiced by Buff, Straub & Hensman also reflects the Arts and Crafts movement in its emphasis on honest structure integrated into landscape. An excellent example of these principles is their 1957 Frank House, constructed at 919 La Loma Road, with landscape design by Garrett Eckbo. The house was designed as a pinwheel in order to integrate it with the surrounding landscape; the post-and-beam construction allowed for the large expanses of glass. The ample fenestration, combined with the siting on the edge of the hillside, give the illusion of living in a tree house. Almost every room in the house is directly connected to the outdoors, and the private gardens off the bedrooms and cantilevered wooden decks overlooking the landscape accentuate the Southern California indoor-outdoor lifestyle. Their designs also incorporated the use of natural materials, seen here in the slate floor, exposed wood ceiling, and brick fireplace.

Calvin Straub and Don Hensman also had overt connections to the Arts and Crafts movement that no doubt had a significant impact on their work. The family of Calvin Straub’s wife founded an Arts and Crafts ceramics firm in 1890. As a teenager Straub discussed architecture with Charles Greene and immersed himself in the writings of Arts and Crafts icons such as William Morris, John Ruskin and Gustav Stickley.⁵⁸ Don Hensman also experienced Craftsman architecture first-hand, as he lived in a

⁵¹ Lamprecht, Barbara. 2005. Pasadena Modern. Pasadena Heritage tour brochure. March.

⁵² Kappe, Shelly. 1986. “Idiom of the Fifties: What Really Happened in Los Angeles.” In *Architecture California*. November/December, p. 15.

⁵³ Gleye, Paul. 1981. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, p. 147.

⁵⁴ Please also see the context statement for Buff, Straub and Hensman.

⁵⁵ Hunt’s works include the Rose Bowl; portions of the Throop Institute, which became the California Institute of Technology; the Pasadena Public Library; Occidental College; the Mission Inn; and the Huntington Hotel.

⁵⁶ Interview with William Evison (Leland Evison’s son) June 2 2008.

⁵⁷ Pasadena Oral History Project. 2003. Interview with Donald C. Hensman, FAIA, by Sarah Cooper. Pasadena Historical Society and Friends of the Pasadena Public Library.

⁵⁸ Kappe, Shelly. 1997. “Calvin Straub (Buff, Straub and Hensman).” Robert Winter, ed. In *Toward a Simpler Way of Life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 291.

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1912 Craftsman home at 377 Arroyo Terrace, located just behind the Gamble House and adjacent to six other Greene and Greene-designed residences designed between 1902 and 1908. The work of Buff & Hensman was recognized in 1987 when they were named the first recipients of the Gamble House Master Craftsman Award, which acknowledges “contemporary artisans whose body of work in all areas of the arts represents the basic principles of the Arts and Crafts movement – the union of client, design, materials and craft.”⁵⁹

Whitney Smith (B.Arch. 1934) and Wayne Williams (B.Arch. 1941) both studied and then taught at USC. Smith and Williams started working together in 1946, and their partnership would last until 1973. During that time, they produced over 200 buildings, including residential architecture, churches, office buildings, and designs on several campuses in Southern California, including JPL. They described their work not in stylistic terms, but instead as a means to produce the best possible living and working environment for their clients in a modern California context.⁶⁰ Esther McCoy described their work as “...unique because of their knowledge and respect for the California modern tradition, and for their structural inventiveness.”⁶¹ Like Calvin Straub, Whitney Smith grew up in Pasadena and was exposed to the work of Greene and Greene at an early age through his parents’ friendship with the Gamble family.⁶²

Other important graduates of the USC program include Thornton Ladd (B.Arch. 1952) and John Kelsey (B.Arch. 1954). The two met while still students, and entered a partnership in 1959 that would flourish for over 20 years. Ladd & Kelsey’s work was featured in the December 1959 issue of *Progressive Architecture* which described their principle design aim of a fully integrated structure, landscape and interior. The pair strove for total design control, orderly articulation of space, and painstaking care in the solution of individual problems. Prime examples of their work include Ladd’s own house and studio at 1083 and 1085 Glen Oaks Boulevard, which he designed while still a student in 1950. In 1961, John Kelsey designed a home for his family at 1160 Chateau Road. The Kelsey House was named a City of Pasadena Landmark in 2005. Another interesting house is a 3,000-square-foot house on 110 Los Altos Drive that Kelsey designed in 1969 and is distinguished by its Tiki-style roof. The firm also won the commission for the Pasadena Museum of Art (now the Norton Simon Museum) in that same year.

There was little single family residential development during the Depression and World War II, so the primary focus of this section is on the postwar period, without excluding earlier examples. The major defining architect-designed residential architecture in prewar Pasadena includes work by well-known figures such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Harwell Hamilton Harris; however, lesser-known Early Modernist proponents, such as Pasadena architect Robert Cox, who designed his house at 1570 Poppy Peak Drive in a manner deemed “extreme” at the time. The major defining architect-designed residential architecture in postwar architecture includes those residences inspired by the tenets of the Case Study House Program; the Post-and-Beam architecture practiced by the teachers and graduates of the University of Southern California’s School of Architecture; and the Modern variation of the Ranch house.

There are also concentrations of architect-designed residential properties from the period, which occur primarily along Pasadena’s western and southern edges. These areas, composed largely of single family residences, occupy hilly terrain that had not been previously developed; this resulted in site-specific designs that responded to the unique circumstances of hillside development and were made possible by new technologies developed during and after the war. An example of this are the stilt or “Bridge Houses” built along previously unbuildable lots on Laguna Road and designed by Joseph Putnam and real estate broker John Carr.⁶³ New technology allowed these houses to be suspended over the Arroyo and a small stream running below. They are of post-and-beam construction, supported by steel piers set in concrete.

⁵⁹ Kaplan, Sam Hall. 1987. “Contemporary Craftsman Style in Pasadena.” *Los Angeles Times*. June 6.

⁶⁰ Clark, Alison. 1991. *The Golden Age of Modernism: Pasadena’s Contribution*. Unpublished. Pasadena Heritage.

⁶¹ McCoy, Esther. n.d. “A Statement of Architectural Principles.”

⁶² Kappe, Shelly. n.d. “Idiom of the Fifties,” p. 16.

⁶³ Highland Park Heritage Trust. 2001. “Modern Arroyo” tour booklet.

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Probably one of the most important and concentrated areas of residential architecture of the City's Recent Past is located in one such hilly area in southwest Pasadena, known as Poppy Peak, the peak after which the neighborhood is named. It is particularly notable because it contains both an excellent range of different approaches to Modernism as well as excellent examples in themselves of prewar and postwar custom designed houses by both well-known, international figures in Modernism, such as Richard Neutra and Harwell Hamilton Harris, as well as highly competent, but not well-known local practitioners of Modernism such as the aforementioned Cox, whose 1937 house shows an adept attention to a particular site, a feature of Modernist design, but yet rendered in clearly individual and independent approach to Modernism. There are also examples on Poppy Peak of later, mid-century work, including four houses by the internationally known Case Study House architects Buff, Straub and Hensman, and fine examples of the period by Lyman Ennis (USC), Leland Eivson (USC; who moved and altered a Harris house in 1951), Kenneth Nishimoto (USC), Alexander Pyper, James Pulliam, and William Henry Taylor. All of these later architects were active in the Pasadena/San Gabriel and Los Angeles chapters of the A.I.A. Neutra's 1955 house here for Dr. Constance Perkins, an art history professor at Occidental College, became the City's first Historic Treasure (now called a Historic Monument).

The area west of the 210 and 710 Freeways on both sides of the Arroyo also contain substantial numbers of houses from the period, particularly in the southwest corner of the city. Many of these are infill properties in previously developed neighborhoods. In some cases, these lots were created by subdividing large estates, for example in the Hillcrest Neighborhood as well as along the Arroyo on lots previously occupied by the Adolphus Busch estate and Busch Gardens.

There are concentrations of high-style family housing, particularly in the westernmost portion of the city. Examples are found in the Linda Vista, San Rafael, Allendale, and Pegfair Estates neighborhoods. Other clusters of residential development from the period occur in the area east of Craig Avenue and north of the 210 Freeway, as well as the area south of Del Mar Boulevard and east of San Gabriel Boulevard.

Pasadena's collection of postwar, single family residential architecture contains other works by known master architects with a wider regional and even national reputation. These include Gregory Ain, A. Quincy Jones, Paul R. Williams, and John Lautner, all of whom share a wider regional importance in the postwar architectural landscape and also worked in Pasadena. In addition to the Perkins House, Neutra designed the extant John Paul Clark House, 1957, near Art Center College of Design, the Schmidt House, 1947, at 1460 Chamberlain Road, was designed in 1947 and altered in the 1950s with an addition to the street elevation. A 1936 house at 1820 Kenneth Way for Lillian and Charles Richter, inventor of the Richter scale and a Caltech seismologist whose house, was demolished in about 1970 for the building of the 210 freeway; a seminal all steel and glass house was built for Caltech historian Charles Beard in 1935 in Altadena; it remains one of Neutra's most important houses.

However, the majority of the architects working in Pasadena during this period are not well known outside of the city. Probably the most successful in reaching some level of acclaim were the firms of Buff, Straub & Hensman; Smith & Williams; and Ladd & Kelsey. These were just some of the cadre of innovative Modernist architects who came out of the USC School of Architecture and designed thoughtful and original designs in Pasadena during the postwar period. Pasadena's Mid-century Modern residential architecture, therefore, is characterized not by individual genius, but by the collective excellence of the architects who worked there after the War.

Context 2: Mid-Century Modernism in the work of Buff, Straub and Hensman: *A Tent with Doors*

Summary Statement

Pasadena-based Conrad Buff and Donald Hensman and their partners at different times, Calvin Straub and Dennis Smith, are considered the leading Southern California practitioners of the important "post and beam" school in modern 20th century

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architecture. “Every California architect educated in the ‘50s and ‘60s has been influenced by the work of this firm,” noted Victor Regnier, former dean of the University of Southern California (USC) School of Architecture.⁶⁴ The movement suddenly emerged with a precedent-setting architecture that was unleashed by an unusual wealth of talent who converged at the University of Southern California at a uniquely fortuitous and optimistic time in post-World War II American history. Buff, Straub & Hensman as well as Buff, Smith & Hensman, the firm’s two principal names, has the additional distinction of maintaining that creative trajectory and work effort over the next five decades and now into its sixth.

Introduction

The term “The USC School” is sometimes used to denote the Post-and-Beam movement in Southern California, emphasizing its roots in the academic institution. Within a smaller radius of geography, though not influence, the practitioners of post-World War II Post-and-Beam architecture, especially in wood, in the Pasadena area⁶⁵ are sometimes referred to as “The Pasadena School.”⁶⁶

The American, California, USC and Pasadena schools of Modernism did not, by and large, subscribe to the European Modernist tenets of machine-age prefabrication, standardization, housing the masses, socialism, or declarative, earnest manifestos that dictated a particular approach to the implications of “modernity” in light of the long arm of European history. Especially as practiced in Southern California, American Modernism had an altogether lighter touch. By and large, it operated within a paradigm of capitalism that advanced consumerism and well-being as a matter of right, with its locus centered upon the individual and the nuclear family. The School’s emerging style, while inspired and grounded in some of the aesthetic lessons of the more dogmatic European theorists, responded especially to several new conditions: the more casual conditions of the new suburban American middle-class, the new wealth of a postwar economy, the nuclear (not the extended) family, and the abundance of land in the Los Angeles region.

Within the larger context of American Modernism, Buff, Straub & Hensman gained early and sustained recognition for articulating a distinctive Modernism that was regionally nuanced but nonetheless internationally influential, beginning with their light, post-and-beam wood-and-glass constructions in the 1950s and 1960s and evolving into a more monumental, volumetric approach thereafter. Buff and Hensman’s non-dogmatic approach, concern for the livability of their spaces, the acute attention to the site, their consummate respect for craft and clarity, their desire to work with individuals as much as create “Architecture,” and to need to have plenty of plain fun along the way, exemplify the USC School.

Usually associated with the single family house, theirs was and is an individual Modernism inflected by many diverse influences unique to their place, time, and personalities, influences both theoretical and personal, from Mies van der Rohe to Craftsman architects such as Charles and Henry Greene; brothers Albert and Alfred Heineman and stair builders/cabinet and furniture makers Peter and John Hall. Their own influence, in turn, was both global and local. Their work was almost automatically included in the internationally important *Arts and Architecture* magazine, 1945-67, publisher John Entenza’s vehicle for the seminal Case Study House program he sponsored, and for which Buff, Straub & Hensman designed two houses: CSH #20, the Bass House, 1955, in Altadena and, as Buff and Hensman, CSH #28, Thousand Oaks, 1966. Hensman credits Straub, better known than either of his protégés, for the introduction to Entenza and influential graphic designer and film title designer Saul Bass, considered a 20th century master of both disciplines for his work with Alfred Hitchcock, Otto Preminger and Martin Scorsese, among many others. Both the magazine and the fresh, progressive architecture it espoused were eagerly devoured by

⁶⁴ Lecture, A.I.A. Orange County, July 22, 2004, by Dennis Sharp, president, Buff, Smith and Hensman.

⁶⁵ Not all these practitioners, such as James Pulliam, Russell Hobbs, and others, attended USC or even West Coast schools. Berkeley and northern California were also influential. After 6 years as Dean of MIT’s School of Architecture and Planning, Case Study House architect William Wurster led the faculty of the School of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, from 1950 to 1963.

⁶⁶ See the undated “The Golden Age of Modernism: Pasadena’s Contribution,” by Alson Clark, who points out older connections, such as architect Leland Evison, who graduated from USC in 1926 and worked for Myron Hunt, architect of the Rose Bowl, among many other important civic commissions.

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architects and critics all over the world. The practice was informally “founded” in 1951 while they were unlicensed undergraduates – even though they had designed both custom houses and hundreds of tract homes as moonlighters. The firm and its iterations have won over 30 awards and citations from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) among other institutions. Dennis Smith, both a USC '60 graduate and a student of Buff and Hensman, joined the firm and is now partner and president of Buff, Smith and Hensman.

Early Development and the Influence of USC on Buff, Straub & Hensman

The Post-and-Beam movement as expressed in Pasadena and Southern California must be distinguished from the type of architecture for which the City is primarily known. Before the watershed of World War II, which changed so many paradigms, Pasadena and southern California were already highly regarded for Craftsman architecture; along with the indigenous pueblo, the Craftsman ethos advocated almost a sacred attitude towards “Nature,” which then mandated, not surprisingly, an acute attention to site – a tradition already in place for millennia in Japan, one anchor in the Craftsman philosophy.

The bungalow in various iterations was the most popular single family house type in America before it lost hegemony to the ranch house after the war. The largesse and romance of the Spanish influence continued to be popular in Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean revivals. Historical eclecticism was manifest in styles from Beaux Arts to Gothic, seen next door to each other in City Hall and All Saints Episcopal Church, both products of the 1920s. These styles had long, illustrious pedigrees grounded in Europe and the West.

Even before the First World War, early Modernists such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra, and Rudolf Schindler not only preached open-plans and new materials but a rethinking of the human relationship between nature and the human. Wright wrote,

“We no longer have an outside and an inside as two separate things ... Now the outside may come inside and the inside may and does go outside. Walls themselves because of glass will become windows and windows as we used to know them as holes in walls will be seen no more.”⁶⁷

The elimination of “holes in wall” in favor of the breaking of the wall into solid and transparent sections, the elimination of *boundary*, was of course, one of 20th century architecture’s most profound concerns. Schindler’s King’s Road House, 1922, creates outdoor rooms and new opportunities for the eradication of boundary. Neutra’s early work, such as the Jardinette Apartments in Hollywood and the Lovell Health House in Los Angeles (as well as in the much later Perkins House in Poppy Peak), also demonstrates a new relationship with nature, now presumed to be critical to one’s health and well-being.

It is also notable to consider what transparency meant to the Europeans. After the war, much of the Modernist architecture developed occurred not in pastoral, undisturbed settings along the banks of the Arroyo. English proponents of new architecture, for example, had to find their way to bomb sites newly opened between Victorian or Georgian roughhouses.⁶⁸ For the Europeans, transparency was more problematic. It could be read as either opportunities for surveillance or for democracy, but came to be most readily associated with the latter. As philosopher Ernst Bloch wrote after the war,

“The wide window, full of the outside world, requires an outside world that is full of attractive strangers, not full of Nazis. A glass door, stretching down to floor level, really does presuppose that, if there is going to be anything peeping in, or pouring in, it will be the sunshine and not the Gestapo.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Aldington, Peter. n.d. “Architecture and the Landscape Obligation in Post-War Houses.” In *The Journal of the Twentieth Century Society*, Twentieth Century Architecture 4, p. 22,

⁶⁸ Overy, Paul. n.d. “Building Sight: House, London NW3 by Brian Housden.” In *The Journal of the Twentieth Century Society*, Twentieth Century Architecture 4, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.