



SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

2008
november | december

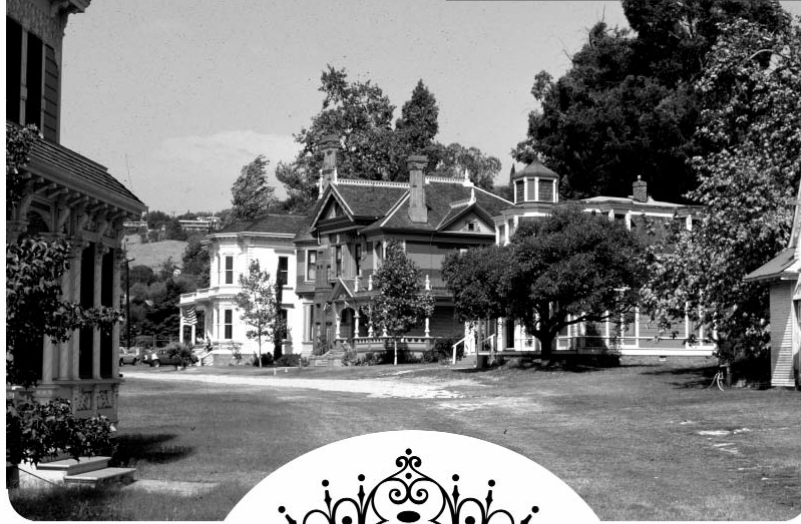
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NEWS



Valley Knudsen house. Photo: Heritage Square.

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Heritage Square. Photo: Heritage Square.

HERITAGE DAYS

SAH/SCC Members' Celebration
Saturday, November 8th, 2:30-4:30PM

Join SAH/SCC for the annual Members' Celebration on Saturday, November 8th, 2:30-4:30PM, as we explore Heritage Square near Highland Park. This collection of eight structures dates from the 1870s to the turn of the 20th century, representing the Victorian Era—the precursor to modernism—that posed such challenges and opportunities for clients, architects, builders, and, later, preservationists.

Curator Michael Ontiveros will speak with us, and we'll have the opportunity to tour the buildings and socialize with members. This annual event is free for members, but reservations are required. We encourage you to bring friends who might want to join the SAH/SCC member roster. Guests are \$10, which is applicable to new memberships. Call 800-9SAHSCC for member reservations, or use Order Form on back page; order guest tickets with Order Form or go to www.sahscc.org.

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SAH/SCC

President's Letter

Last fall, SAH/SCC launched its Crossroads Campaign. It was time for reflection and transition. We began by surveying you, the membership, to find out what you like most and least about us.

What you like best is clear: the range of thoughtful, educational, and very personal events that allow members to engage with architecture in a way rarely offered. You deeply value our mission to educate the public about the rich and diverse architectural heritage of Southern California. You also rely on advance notice of SAH/SCC events that often sell out before they are opened to the public. Lastly, you appreciate our efforts to keep event costs down for members.

Like many nonprofits, SAH/SCC has faced rising printing and mailing costs, plus declining membership levels. We've been forced to look at the options that technology offers to operate more efficiently and still maintain what you have identified as the advantages of membership in the organization.

The reality is that the things you like best about the organization can be enhanced through technology. Many tour-goers have noticed that we have begun to use email as a way to provide directions to events. We've recently instituted the SAH Alert, to remind you about upcoming tours and important ticket deadlines. This month, we are introducing a new feature: an electronic version of the newsletter sent to members via email. The e-newsletter will have links to relevant information and easy event sign-up. Additionally, the e-newsletter will link to a printable version with all the same features you've come to know and love. And during the next few months, SAH/SCC News will make a full transition from a printed and mailed version to electronic distribution only.

In 2009 SAH/SCC will also launch a newly redesigned website that expands our public education mission and offers out-of-print SAH/SCC publications from past events.

In the coming year, your Executive Board will be bringing you a range of exciting new tours and events that continue the traditions of this organization. Spring will feature a re-invigorated Modern Patrons program featuring original owners of modern homes, a tour and symposium on the changing architecture of Los Angeles' public libraries, and stimulating lectures on modernism in Cuba and the adaptive nature of the Mediterranean house.

It is amazing to consider that our events are generated by an all-volunteer Board. When I talk about SAH/SCC, I always say that the reason I joined was for the buildings—but the reason I stay involved is for the people. The organization has afforded me the opportunity to serve with a roster of dedicated Board Members and to meet many members who share a passion for life and an eagerness for dialogue about how the built environment shapes us as individuals and as a society. As the organization looks to the future, we view technology as an opportunity to deepen and expand that dialogue.

If you have not yet provided us with your e-mail address, please take a few moments now to send it to us at sahscc-info@sahscc.org to ensure that you don't miss a single issue. Our promise to you is that SAH/SCC maintains a strict privacy policy. We do not share mailing or email addresses with anyone.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you in 2009!

Sian Winship



Tour and Event Information: 1.800.972.4722; sahscc-info@sahscc.org

SAH/SCC NEWS is published bi-monthly by the Society of Architectural Historians / Southern California Chapter. Subscription is a benefit of membership and provides members with one of the most comprehensive calendars of architectural events in Southern California and advance notice of exclusive SAH/SCC architectural events and tours.

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SAH/SCC Gift Guide

Give great architecture for the holidays!
 What better way to treat your friends, relatives, and business colleagues than to give them gift memberships to SAH/SCC for the holidays? Sweaters and ties come and go, but experiencing rare architectural jewels makes memories that last a lifetime. To celebrate the holidays, we are offering a 20% discount for special gift memberships at all levels (except Student). Your friends will get a subscription to SAH/SCC News, member prices on events, and free Members' Celebration. Plus, memberships are tax deductible. Another creative gift would be a full set of SAH/SCC Publications. Our publications are the next best thing to having been on a tour. Better yet, give both! See the back page for more info.





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Heritage Square at sunset.



Museums of the Arroyo Day at Heritage Square.



Halle House.

The Machine Age triumphed in the late 19th century. New inventions and production methods turned small factories into big businesses that needed white-collar supervisors, bookkeepers, and clerks. The white-collar class grew eight times the rate of the population. And this new middle class had the means to move up to new homes and unfamiliar lifestyles. The middle class maybe could not afford the masonry mansions of the rich, with hand-carved details, but they could show off their new status with grand wooden houses adorned by machine-made wooden "gingerbread" (available by the linear foot), lathe-turned banister posts, and simulated carved paneling wallcovering. And show off they did, with as many kinds of surface ornament, each highlighted in a different hue, and as many gables and exotic style references as their budgets could afford. But they wondered if they exhibited "good taste" or if they were being sneered at by passersby. They sought guidance.

At an architect's office, they pored over plan books, picking a turret from one illustration, a pillared porch from another, an elaborate chimney from yet a third. Architects advertised that they could produce fancy homes for any budget. By convincing the client (unfamiliar with "good taste") that he knew what was aesthetically correct, the architect triumphed. But would these pastiches of turrets and porches prove structurally sound? That's where the builders came in. Balloon-frame houses were light-weight relative to size and designers and carpenters often figured out, on site, when more bracing was needed here, or a wall extended there.

The result? Colorful jumbles of forms, eclectic mélanges of borrowed and fanciful styles—all designed for conspicuous consumption, to impress occupants and outsiders of wealth and status. But, notice: kitchens, back porches, and back bedrooms are bare-bones plain. The exterior trim is only on the sides to be seen from the sidewalk. The display aesthetic meant housekeeping nightmares, repainting panics, and competitive display anxieties. Architectural modernism, emphasizing efficiency and simpler living, was a reaction to those Victorian anxieties.

Victorian houses went out of fashion, were converted to boarding houses, and painted white to escape notice. In the 1960s and '70s, preservationists took an interest. But saving and restoring these neglected showpieces was daunting. That a few survived—even in L.A.—has much to do with their builders' innovations, redwood sills, and the dedication of droves of volunteers.

Join us as we take a close look at the stories the eight structures at Heritage Square can tell us about an era of opportunity and challenge.



Valley Knudson house.

Photos: Heritage Square.

Postcard From Long Beach

On a beautiful Saturday in October, we spent the day "Getting to Know Architect Paul Edward Tay" in Long Beach. Organized by architect and SAH/SCC Board Member Adam Wheeler, the day featured five unique homes in five unique neighborhoods.



Braly Residence (1972) on Naples canals.

As Adam pointed out, the day reflected the evolving and maturing body of work of one modern architect. Spanning nearly 20 years, from 1954 to 1972, Tay's residential work revealed itself as thoughtful in plan, dynamic in section, and responsive to client needs.

We began the day at the Braly Residence, a multi-story home with stunning views of the Naples canals. Here Tay raised the main living spaces to the second story to preserve the privacy of the residents. This was also our first glimpse of Tay's talent for bringing light into spaces through the use of large elevated expanses of glass at roof height. From Naples, the tour moved to Park Estates and Signal Hill to view the architect's response to a suburban corner lot and a steep hill-



Penn Residence (1954) in Bixby Knolls.

side conditions. The day concluded in the delightful Bixby Knolls neighborhood with visits to the Drake and Penn Residences.

The Penn Residence provided the perfect venue for us to reflect on what we had seen throughout the day and to discuss it with fellow tour-goers over wine and cheese. Adam led several of the current homeowners in a thoughtful discussion about living and restoring a modern ranch-style home. In the end, Paul Tay revealed himself to be one of the many talented, but unsung, modern architects working in Southern California in the mid-20th Century. His legacy is evidenced by the continued dialogue that the homes are having with a new generation of owners.



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SAH/SCC Event:

Members' Celebration—November 8th

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SAH/SCC PUBLICATIONS

Paul Tay, Architect: 4"x 8" color brochure featuring five modern ranch-style homes in Long Beach _____ at \$3 each

Architecture: Inside and Outside: 5"x5" folded color brochure featuring Santa Barbara's Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, and Val Verde _____ at \$3 each

Out of the Shadow: 24-page, two-color brochure from Phoenix travel tour featuring the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Al Beadle, Blaine Drake, Paolo Soleri, Edward B. Sawyer, Bennie Gonzales, and Will Bruder _____ at \$12 each

A Block in Glendale: pocket-size fandeck of cards featuring five diverse properties—including a Paul Williams residence—plus historical background information on the Brockmont Heights subdivision _____ at \$3 each

Rodney Walker 3 30 90: 12-page brochure exploring the architect's usage of the three-foot module and features nine homes on five sites _____ at \$8 each

Edward Killingsworth: Setting a Modern Standard: 20-page, black-and-white brochure featuring seven Long Beach houses and an article by the architect _____ at \$8 each

Space and Learning: eight-page, four-color brochure on the historical and contemporary legacy of LA school architecture featuring projects by Richard Neutra, Thom Mayne, Rios Clementi Hale Studios, and others _____ at \$8 each

Rodney Walker: The Ojai Years: tri-fold, black-and-white brochure featuring Walker's important residences in Ojai, with pictures and article by historian David Mason _____ at \$5 each

Kesling Homes: bi-fold, two-color brochure from the "Kesling Modern Structures" tour _____ at \$2 each

The Historic and Modern Spirit of Ventura: 20-page guide from Ventura tour _____ at \$10 each

Modernism for the Masses: tri-fold brochure with inserts of detailed floor plans of Eichler homes visited on the Orange County tour _____ at \$10 each

Reconsidering Lloyd Wright: 21-page, four-color booklet from "Reconsidering Lloyd Wright" house tour _____ at \$10 each

Union Station and MTA Transit Center: bi-fold map for a self-guided walking tour including historical facts and photos _____ at \$2 each

David Gebhard Review: essays on the Works Project Administration by Robert W. Winter, Orville O. Clarke, Jr., and Mitzi March Mogul _____ at \$5 each

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