QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

ARCHITECTS WORKING FOR DEVELOPERS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 1960-1973

by

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ABSTRACT

Despite a surge in research and scholarship on postwar modern architecture in Southern California, little is known about a generation of architects who worked with the developers and/or merchant builders to create large numbers of single-family residences and multi-family, multi-story residential structures erected between 1960 and 1973. As of 2010, historic resources from the 1960s onward are meeting the fifty-year eligibility threshold for the National Register of Historic Places, yet even the 2002 suburban context written by the National Trust for Historic Preservation does not provide critical background information for identifying and understanding the significance of resources after 1960. Compounding this problem is that architects who worked for developers were covered in non-indexed shelter magazines and typically not well documented in the architectural trade magazines. To fill this gap, this thesis looks at three prolific modern architects who designed extensively for developers, Edward H. Fickett, Richard L. Dorman, and William Krisel.

Using primary sources, this study provides a historic context for residential development in two periods in Southern California, 1945-1959 and 1960-1973. It also closely examines selected projects from these periods for each of the three architects profiled. Projects from the early period include Sherman Park, Meadowlark Park, Midland La Mirada, Twin Palms, and Sanford D. Adler's Living Conditioned Homes. Projects from the later period include La Costa Resort and Spa, Grossmont Hills, Huntington Harbour, Ocean Towers, Coronado Shores, and Park Plaza.

What emerges from this analysis is a better understanding of how each architect enhanced the quality of architecture in developer housing, as well contributed to the

quantity of them. Fickett emerges as a pioneer of the modified modern through decoupling the post-and-beam method of construction from the post-and-beam aesthetic. Dorman finds inspiration for his tract-home designs in his commercial and industrial developer projects rather than his custom-home projects. Krisel elevates tract-home development by applying commercial/retail principles and avant-garde design to enhance the architectural cadence of tract housing developments. Subsequently, Krisel's experience informs and elevates the state of multi-story, multi-family residential projects from the early 1970s.

In sum, the findings challenge conventional wisdom, demonstrating that tract houses and other developer offerings are not dumbed-down versions of custom-house designs. They are more likely to be influenced by commercial and retail architecture than architectural historians had previously thought. Fundamental to this finding is that these residences are "products" and the architects who worked for developers became facile at all aspects of the developer's business, including cost containment and marketing. Further, the research points to a perfect storm of social, political and economic factors which created a generation of pragmatist architects with the skills and the interests necessary to serve the needs of developer clients.

These findings have implications for architectural historians and preservationists. Historians can now find value in a rich array of modern architecture from the postwar era and acknowledge the influence of commercial and retail work in housing product design. Likewise, they are encouraged to give new consideration to the speculative house— as a hybrid of investment product, residence, roadside attraction, and advertisement.

Finally, the legacies of Fickett, Dorman and Krisel come into sharper focus for their innovations and contributions to the built environment. For preservationists, it becomes clear that new tools are needed for the identification, documentation and preservation of these historic resources. Along with this, is the need for a new mindset that finds value in multiple identical resources over the singular one. This research also raises questions about the character-defining features of modern architecture and the importance of the interior spatial relationships that cannot be easily discerned from windshield surveys. This study is an early contribution to a growing body of research needed to understand the history of the recent past and to preserve it in the future.

INTRODUCTION

The 1950s and 1960s shaped the built landscape in Southern California like few decades before them. Open expanses of land, along with orange, olive, and lemon groves, were transformed into housing. Commercial, industrial, and institutional infrastructure in the region grew symbiotically. As a result, a large quantity of the extant historic resources in Southern California are from this period and preservationists in the region are just beginning to contend with their identification and significance. Architecturally, Modernism flourished during these decades and the region is home to broad continuum of quality in modern design. Although the work of modern architects like Richard Neutra, R.M. Schindler, Gregory Ain, and John Lautner has gained awareness and recognition in recent years, there is a rich array of modern architecture that developed in Southern California during the postwar era. It is the intention of this thesis to bring the work of a few lesser-known architects into sharper focus.

As eloquently pointed out by author Inge Schaefer Horton in her book on overlooked women architects of Northern California, "…conventional architectural history is based on tracing the influence of outstanding buildings and saluting their star architects and prominent, mostly wealthy, clients."[1] This construct not only resulted in the neglect of dozens of pioneering women architects, but in the oversight of a generation of prolific architects who worked with developers and merchant builders in the postwar period. These men are virtually invisible in magazines such as *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture*.[2] Yet their imprint on Southern California's architectural landscape is far more widespread than any of the currently recognized "stars."

Three cases in point: Edward H. Fickett, Richard L. Dorman and William Krisel. By the architects' own estimates, Fickett and Krisel each built in excess of 40,000 buildings (with some estimates even greater than that). While the numbers for Dorman do not reach the tens of thousands, his prolific career resulted in a large body of work—including multiple dwellings for tract reproduction. Yet, Fickett was published in *Architectural Record* or *Progressive Architecture* only three times; and Krisel only once. Dorman published nine articles, but these focused primarily on his commercial work. In contrast, these architects were expansively published in other sources such as the shelter magazines[3] and the local newspaper.[4]

While some scholars, such as David Smiley, have noted the importance of the shelter magazines in "Making the Modified Modern"[5] and Elizabeth Jo Lampl has made an excellent study of Charles Goodman (an architect who specifically sought out tract housing projects with merchant builders),[6] no one has attempted a holistic study of this architectural phenomenon and applied it to the cradle of postwar Modernism in Southern California.[7] Greg Hise's seminal work on postwar housing, *Magnetic Los Angeles*, stops short chronologically of the late 1950s and leaves the story of the 1960s and 1970s for others to investigate.[8] The 2002 *National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs* traces the development of suburban communities only up through 1960 — leaving a gap for resources coming of age daily via the fifty-year eligibility threshold of the National Register.[9]

To this end, this thesis focuses on the work of three architects who worked for developers, and more specifically, on key residential projects they designed for those developers between the years of 1960 and 1973. As previously noted, the period begins

with resources that have become eligible for National Register nomination within the last year and ends with the 1973 oil crisis and recession that curtailed economic growth and building in Southern California as well as across the nation. At this time, there was also a drastic reduction in the number of developers and merchant builders.

The selection of Fickett, Dorman, and Krisel for examination is deliberate. They are all trained and licensed architects with established independent practices (as opposed to architects and draftsmen who may have worked at a development company). They are all prolific architects who came of age in the same period with common experiences, trigger points and seminal moments (e.g., World War II, the GI Bill, the transition away from the Beaux Arts curriculum in architectural education, and postwar technology). These experiences affected both the quantity and quality of what they designed. All three were architects trained in and practicing modern architecture. Dorman and Fickett have recently had buildings evaluated as historic resources by the preservation community, which were subsequently denied significance.[10] And although in recent years Krisel has received recognition for his 1950s Palm Springs houses for developer George Alexander, there are thousands of Krisel buildings outside the Palm Springs area that will face future evaluation. All three of these architects also have a history of working with multiples (i.e., identical, mass-produced, replicated houses). Multiples often prove a special challenge to preservationists, for whom scarcity is factored into significance. Finally, because many of the works of these architects date from the 1960s forward, there is also a lack of existing scholarship on their work.

For each architect, a project (or projects) from 1960-1973 was selected for closer analysis. The goal was to select projects that would both be emblematic of the architect's

body of work as well as showcase a breadth of developer projects from the period. Projects were also selected based on the quality of their design. For Fickett, his designs for the clubhouse, speculative housing, and a custom house at the La Costa Resort reveal much about the trickle upwards of the architectural language he developed for tract houses, as well as the growing interest among homeowners in trading their suburban family-oriented homes for resort-style living. The same cultural trend is in evidence in the Dorman case study for Huntington Harbour in which the architect is called upon to design a tract home for a planned marina-based development on the periphery of Los Angeles. For Krisel, the study of his multi-story, multi-family residential projects Ocean Towers (1971) and Coronado Shores (design circa 1969) demonstrates how Krisel leveraged the experience he gained in designing tracts of replicated single-family residences. It also tracks the common mobility patterns of postwar empty nesters who willingly traded in their high-maintenance suburban tract homes for the convenience of high-rise apartments and condominiums during the early 1970s. In addition to the diversity in the types of projects that were selected for analysis, the case studies are also chronologically diverse with projects from the early-, mid- and late- 1960s as well as the early 1970s.

Chapter One of this thesis, therefore, establishes the cultural, economic and architectural context for these case studies. It provides an overview of the residential development industry in postwar Southern California. The chapter explores both the foundational period of 1945-1959 and the later period of 1960-1973 as a way of understanding the full context of the architects who worked for developers. Chapters Two, Three, and Four each focus on one of the three architects selected for study:

Edward H. Fickett, Richard L. Dorman and William Krisel. For each architect, the chapter will examine the seminal events and institutional influences that affected his work, discuss his relationship with developers, and analyze a building or group of buildings from the period 1960-1973. While the focus of this analysis is on residential architecture, preliminary research established the importance of looking at a wider range of the architects' work (including their industrial and commercial projects) as a means of understanding their influence on housing design. An ongoing subtheme of this analysis will be the cross-pollination of architectural influences and the dialogue between the architect's custom-house and speculative/tract projects. In the conclusion, common themes are identified along with their implications for future research and the work of architectural historians and preservationists.

What emerges from this analysis challenges the conventional wisdom that the tract-house is simply a "dumbed-down" version of a custom house with scale and budgetary restrictions. A key to understanding this is that houses designed and built for developers are first and foremost the creation of "products." As such, they often draw more from an architect's experiences with commercial and retail commissions than they do from his custom-house designs. Much like commercial structures, such houses must maximize square footage and construction efficiencies to lower the cost of goods sold and maximize return on investment. Like retail stores, they are also meant to engage potential buyers who arrive by automobile.

What also emerges, however, is a picture of a new generation of modern architects who emphasized the business aspects of the profession vs. the theoretical underpinnings and the dogma of the generations of modern architects that preceded

them. This generation is exemplified in Southern California by Fickett, Dorman, and Krisel, but evidence of this pragmatism can be found from Seattle to Florida in the work of such architects as Robert A Fisher, Rodney Friedman, Edward "Tim" Siebert, Edward L. Varney, and many others.

This generation of architects, unlike their predecessors, rarely wrote books or magazine articles, or spent time talking about architectural ideas when they could have been building. Because modern architecture is predicated on ideas and their manifestations in form, this can leave historians at a loss for understanding the work on any level other than the superficial. As a result, a generation of architects responsible for perhaps more buildings than any other in American history remains unknown, unevaluated or misunderstood. The following pages are meant as a context for evaluating potential significance in a kind of work long ignored by historians.

This thesis owes a debt of gratitude to the emerging discipline of generational psychology as a framework for better understanding this generation of modern architects. Specifically, the work of Lloyd Rogler of Fordham University and his article "Historical Generations and Psychology: the Case of the Great Depression and World War II."[11] In it, Rogler posits a more complex explanation for generational similarities than age cohorts or natural intervals in birth cycles. Rogler argues that "cataclysmic events" have lasting effects on the psychology of those who experience them and, therefore, their actions.[12] Rogler also points to the importance the timing of the cataclysmic event in a person's life cycle, noting that a person in the early adult stage of their life cycle is "…in critical transition from dependent roles in their families of orientation to roles entailing adult responsibilities in families of procreation; they are

"coming of age."[13] Examples of cataclysmic events according to Rogler, include wars, revolutions, economic upheavals, natural, or man-made disasters.[14] Indeed, several of these factors were major influences in the career trajectories of Fickett, Dorman and Krisel.

Rogler then argues that the cataclysmic event during the coming-of-age period "…begins to create similarities in the orientations of persons…and the similarities are nurtured by institutional influences and cultural emblems oriented towards the persons."[15] According to Rogler, "Society's age segregation…facilitates social interactions among age peers who have been drawn into the same institutional structures: military units, industrial plants, schools, voluntary organizations, and neighborhoods."[16] Governmental policies can also be viewed as an institutional influence, and Rogler identifies the G.I. Bill of Rights[17] as one of the "most important institutional influences" for a generation.[18] Cultural emblems, as Rogler defines them, are the collective cultural manifestations associated with the event catalysts from the coming of age period. Examples include popular music, cultural icons, ritualized behavior and celebrations, and other unifying symbols of collective memory. According to Rogler, "Generation identities become robust and orientations persist when they are repeatedly supported by emblematic representations. They are capable of surviving as part of the individual's self-concept in competition with other status identities — ethnic, racial, gender, social, and economic…"[19]

In sum, Rogler states that members of a generation are bound together by "…an intricate web of perceptions, judgments, feelings and aspirations."[20] By using Rogler's construct of generational psychology to inform a landscape analysis of Fickett, Dorman,

and Krisel's approaches to housing the masses, a clearer picture begins to emerge of the similarities and differences between their philosophies and their resultant bodies of work. They quickly distinguish themselves as the *pragmatist generation*.[21]

Architectural critic Esther McCoy embraced a similar philosophy (if not an articulated model) in her seminal work *Five California Architects*. In the 1975 edition of the book, McCoy included a new foreword by John Entenza, editor of *Arts & Architecture* magazine. Entenza wrote, "It should be, I think, the purpose of any book about forgotten giants and heroes to not only place them in their time and to catalog their accomplishments but, in some way, to orient them into the peculiarities of the special cultural patterns of the moment."[22] This sets the stage for McCoy's exploration of the individual work of Irving Gill, Rudolph Schindler, Charles and Henry Greene, and Bernard Maybeck. Viewed in their totality, McCoy retroactively captured the essence of the early creative spirit of architecture in California. At the core of this work, and her subsequent book, *The Second Generation*, is the implied importance of the shared experiences among architects — as well as the social, political and economic dynamics of their times — in understanding the potential significance of their architectural contribution.

With that in mind, this thesis explores at length the cataclysmic event of World War II as it applied to Fickett, Dorman and Krisel. It also examines the important institutional influences including the GI Bill, the maturation of architectural pedagogy at universities, and the rise of corporate architecture as a source of early work experiences and a unique framework upon which to model individual architectural practices.

Prior to embarking on this exploration, it is necessary to define terms for the reader including those from both real estate and architectural history. The term *developer* (as used in the title and throughout this manuscript) is associated with the purchaser and sub-divider of tracts or large parcels of land upon which the developer erects buildings (single-family or multi-family residential, industrial or commercial) for resale to a buyer. The related term *merchant builder* is a type of developer. As coined by Ned Eichler, son of the well-known merchant-builder Joseph Eichler, a merchant builder is:

> The term used to designate a person or a company who purchases a parcel of raw land and turns it into a group of houses for sale. The major functions are land acquisition and development, construction, financing, and marketing. Unlike most manufacturers, merchant builders take their product, a house on a lot, from its virgin state directly to a consumer. There are no middle men or dealers as, for example, in the automobile business.[23]

As noted in Eichler's definition above, a distinguishing characteristic of merchant builders, both large and small, is their inspiration from the automobile industry. This translates to an emphasis on standardization in design and construction and a production-driven business model for the rapid construction of identical houses.

As a result, the byproduct of merchant builders is *tract houses*. This term is used to describe a series of houses erected from a pre-determined group of standardized plans and elevations. Quantities of houses in a tract may vary from as low as 20 to as many as 500 units. The larger the tract, the more likely it was built in phases to control investment capital and inventory.

Residential developers might also be engaged in the creation of *speculative houses*. Speculative or "spec" houses are usually "one-off" designs for dwellings conceived and constructed without a specific owner in mind, then erected by the developer for resale to a potential buyer. Spec houses were often created in developments in which buyers

could elect to purchase the speculative house or an undeveloped parcel for their own design.

The term *showcase house* is also used to describe any house that upon its completion was widely promoted and opened to the public for tours prior to its occupancy by its future owners. The beneficiary of this promotion could be a wide range of organizations including a developer, a charity, a magazine, a utility company, or a manufacturer who receive publicity for their product or cause.

With respect to architectural movements and styles, this analysis must straddle the linguistic divide between architectural historians and preservationists who have yet to settle on a single lexicon. As author Thomas Hines notes, "…the words 'modern' and 'modernism' are…vexing."[24] This is largely due to the fact that modernism is a philosophy; one that has yielded a wide array of art and architecture. Hence many historians balk at preservationists who describe "Modern" as a style. The great divide seems to reside in the theory of modernism vs. the practical application of the "ism" to the design and construction of buildings.

To this end, this thesis will take a page from the author and Neutra scholar, Barbara Lamprecht, and use the term *Modernism* to describe the theory: "…the range of questions proposed to oneself then resolved through a series of problem-solving choices, architecturally."[25] Lamprecht further posits how the theoretical is linked to the practical, "the answers to these questions produced a range of building elements and spatial relationships that collectively and loosely create an umbrella for how *modern architecture* looks and feels."[26] These "elements and spatial relationships" are the visual language by which preservationists create the character-defining features of a style.

Therefore, the following analysis departs from the umbrella use of the term "Modern" offered by Virginia and Lee McAlester in their well-circulated work, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. In it, the McAlesters use the term "Modern" to describe houses constructed from 1935 to the present including minimal traditional, ranch, contemporary, and shed styles.[27] They also use it to describe "a fantasy or extraordinary design that is clearly one of-a-kind" as illustrated in the book by pictures of the work of Bruce Goff and John Lautner.[28] Such generalities would only contribute to confusion in the forthcoming analysis.

Therefore, in the following pages, style definitions will be derived from the Historic Context Statement for SurveyLA that clearly differentiates between "Mid-Century Modern" and "Ranch" styles.[29] While imperfect, the SurveyLA style lexicon is being used to identify and document over 800,000 historic resources in the City of Los Angeles.[30] It will be the lexicon for the next generation of preservationists in the City and surely inform efforts in other Southern California communities.

In this thesis, the term *Mid-Century Modern* will be used to describe buildings with simple, geometric volumes, direct expression of the structural system (often post-and-beam), primarily flat roofs, unornamented wall surfaces, and floor-to-ceiling windows (see Figure I:1).[31]

The term *avant-garde* will be applied to buildings that contain all of the above features and represent the advance group of modern architects whose works are characterized chiefly by unorthodox and experimental ideas, forms and methods. For example, expressionistic roof forms such as butterfly, parabolic, folded plate or barrel vault are described as avant-garde (see Figure I:2).

Again taking a page from SurveyLA, *Ranch* is used to describe houses with asymmetrical composition, gabled rooflines, a variety of wall cladding materials (board and batten, stucco, stone), and picture windows.[32] Ranch houses may include details from contemporary interpretations of historical motifs (e.g., shutters, Dutch doors, Monterey balconies). These will be referred to as Traditional Ranch (see Figure I:3).[33] Ranch houses with Asian-influenced details will be referred to as Ranch Oriental (Se Figure I:4). Finally, Ranch houses with minimalist detailing will be described as Ranch Contemporary (see Figure I:5).

Figure I:1 Example Mid-Century Modern style tract house from Mandeville West (1964) tract in West Los Angeles developed by Stan Schwartz and Art Linkletter. Photo by the author.

Figure I:2 Example avant-garde Mid-Century Modern house. The Beber Residence (1960) by Richard L. Dorman. Photo by the author.

Figure I:3 Example Traditional Ranch house. Baldwin Hills Estates tract (1950-59). Used with permission. Copyright ARG/SurveyLA 2010. Not for reproduction.

Figure I:4 Example Ranch Oriental house. Baldwin Hills Estates tract (1950-59). Used with permission. Copyright ARG/SurveyLA 2010. Not for reproduction.

Figure I:5 Example Ranch Contemporary house. Baldwin Hills Estates tract (1950-59). Used with permission. Copyright ARG/SurveyLA 2010. Not for reproduction.

Lastly, as this thesis will show, it is useful to specifically define the term *post-and-beam.* Post-and-beam is a method of construction distinct from the traditional balloon-frame method. Post-and-beam construction uses a system of vertical posts and horizontal beams to support the weight of the roof. With interior and exterior walls no

longer bearing the load, the free or open plan is enabled and the architect may elect to use partial height walls or glass to define interior and exterior spaces. As a method of construction, post-and-beam was often used by modern architects for its ability to contribute to simple unornamented geometric forms, large expanses of glass, etc. When this method of construction is celebrated through its visibility and provides the architectural language of the design, it will be referred to as the *post-and-beam aesthetic* (see Figure I:6)

Figure I:6 An example of post-and-beam construction clearly visible in the post-and-beam aesthetic. Mullikin Residence (1964) by Richard L. Dorman. Photo by the author.

[1] Inge Schaeffer Horton, *Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area: The Lives and Works of Fifty Professionals, 1890-1951* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010), 7.

[2] In comparison, Richard Neutra is mentioned eighty-six times in *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture* and John Lautner is mentioned seventeen times.

[3] Shelter magazines (e.g., *Sunset*, *Living for Young Homemakers*, *Redbook*, etc) were conceived and edited for popular consumption—particularly to take advantage of the postwar interest in homemaking and home design. Because they are not regarded as "journals," their value as historical documents has been severely underestimated by librarians and archivists who failed to index them and/or disposed of them in overcrowded periodical storage rooms. Making utility of these magazines even more difficult is the fact that the magazines themselves may not have identified the architects associated with the houses featured. As such, eventual digitizing into a searchable database (should it even occur) would result in limited utility. An example of both of these conditions is the seminal postwar shelter magazine of the western states, *Sunset*, which is neither fully indexed nor rigorously documents the architects involved with all of the houses featured.

[4] In addition to the shelter magazines, architects who worked with developers and merchant builders were likely to have been published frequently in local newspapers. Taking our previous examples into consideration, Fickett, Krisel and Dorman were each published over 500 times in the *Los Angeles Times* between 1945 and 1980. This is the result of two factors: 1) developers who aggressively advertised their buildings for sale, lease, or rent and received complementary editorial as a result and 2) the work of an emerging group of architectural publicists. With increased demand for architectural services in the postwar period and the evolution of architectural practices to more closely resemble businesses vs. ateliers, competition increased and firms engaged the services of publicists.

[5] David Smiley, "Making the Modified Modern," *Perspecta* 32 (2001): 33-54, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567281 (accessed December 28, 2010).

[6] Elizabeth Jo Lampl, "Charles M. Goodman and Tomorrow's Vernacular," *Housing Washington,* ed. Richard Longstreth (Chicago, Il: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2010), 229-253.

[7] Even in Thomas Hines' comprehensive work on modern architecture in Los Angeles from 2010, *Architecture of the Sun*, Fickett and Dorman are omitted and only Krisel's most well-known houses in Palm Springs are covered.

[8] Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 185.

[9] David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*. September 2002. National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/index.htm (accessed August

2, 2011).

[10] In 2009, Dorman's Paper Mate Building at 1621 26th Street in Santa Monica, California was deemed as "lacking aesthetic or architectural value" in a Historic Assessment Report prepared by PCR and is currently slated for demolition in conjunction with the expansion of the light rail system to Santa Monica. At the time of writing, the designation of Fickett's Sunset Lanai Apartments at 1422 N. Sweetzer in West Hollywood as a cultural resource was on hold for an indeterminate period, pending a decision by the City Council. The George Jacobsen Residence (1966) by Fickett was designated Historic Cultural Monument No. 674 by the City of Los Angeles in 2000. The Jacobsen Residence is a custom-house design.

[11] Lloyd H. Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology: The Case of the Great Depression and World War II," *American Psychologist* (December 2002): 1013.

[12] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1014.

[13] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1016.

[14] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1015.

[15] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1013.

[16] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1017.

[17] Also known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944.

[18] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1017.

[19] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1018.

[20] Rogler, "Historical Generations and Psychology," 1014.

[21] Research by the author on seminal influences and important milestones for architects from other regions who worked with developers and merchant builders including Charles Goodman, Edward Tim Siebert, Ralph Haver, and Paul Hayden Kirk are consistent with the findings herein, leading the author to coin the term the "pragmatist generation" to describe the phenomenon observed.

[22] Esther McCoy, *Five California Architects (*Los Angeles, CA: Hennessey + Ingalls, Inc., 1987), VI.

[23] Ned Eichler, Introduction to *The Merchant Builders* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), xii.

[24] Thomas Hines, *Architecture of the Sun: Los Angeles Modernism 1900-1970* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2010), 13.

[25] Barbara Lamprecht, telephone interview by author, August 6, 2011.

[26] Barbara Lamprecht, telephone interview by author, August 6, 2011.

[27] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide To American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 476.

[28] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide To American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 485.

[29] SurveyLA is the Citywide Survey of Historic Resources in the City of Los Angeles. A large and detailed historic context statement was specifically developed for the "Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1980" context. This document identified and described in detail the character defining features of dozens of common styles and sub-styles found in Southern California including Mid-Century Modern, Ranch, New

Formalism, and Corporate Modernism. These styles and features were used by surveyors to identify and record historic resources during the survey process.

[30] City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, "About SurveyLA," http://preservation.lacity.org/survey/description (accessed August 8, 2011).

[31] Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles, "Post-War Modernism Theme," *SurveyLA Architecture and Engineering Context, 1850-1980*, August 2010, 8-11.

[32] Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles, "Ranch Theme," *SurveyLA Architecture and Engineering Context, 1850-1980*, August 2010, 1-2.

[33] In his book *Ranch House*, Alan Hess exhaustively describes many subtypes of Ranch-style houses designed during the postwar era. Variations on the Ranch house are also explicitly detailed in the context statement for SurveyLA including "Ranch-Traditional," "Ranch-Contemporary," "Ranch-Oriental," and many others.

CHAPTER ONE:
AN OVERVIEW OF POSTWAR DEVELOPER HOUSING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

To better understand the generation of architects that worked with developers in the 1960s and early 1970s, this chapter examines the merchant-built housing boom in Southern California between 1945-1959 as well as the evolution of merchant-built and developer-built projects between 1960-1973. Each of these chronological examinations identifies important the economic, sociological, architectural, and government policy trends of the times which affected development in Southern California and beyond.[1] Because most of the architects who worked for developers in the latter period began their practices in the earlier one, an overview of both of these periods is important for understanding the work of the three architects who are profiled in-depth and examined through case studies in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

1945-1959: Idealism and Compromise Yield Better Quality of Life

With the ink barely dry on the May 8, 1945 surrender of Germany to the Allies and the surrender of Japan still a month away, an article in the August 5 edition of the *Los Angeles Times* entitled "Can We Expect 'MIRACLES' in Postwar Houses?" indicated how eager Americans were to put the tragedy of war behind them, to make new homes, and begin the life that peace and prosperity promised.[2] The article begins, "An interesting effort to resolve the controversy now ranging between the "miracle house" advocates and those clinging desperately to the symbol of 'house as we have known it' is being made by the national architectural magazine, *Arts and Architecture*."[3] While the article is an announcement for magazine publisher John Entenza's Case Study House Program of exhibition houses, it is evidence of the existence of two mindsets: those who

believed in the power of good design, innovative materials, and new technologies to enhance the quality of life for average Americans in the postwar period and those who were more skeptical about the social agenda of modern architecture and yearned for tradition and normalcy.

John Entenza was not alone in his interest in creating showcase or exhibit houses that featured modern architectural ideas, construction technologies, and the latest products. In March of 1946, before the first Case Study House opened for public visitation, a house known as the first "Post War House," was constructed by the real estate developer, Fritz Burns. Burns hired architects William Wurdeman and Welton Becket to design it.[4] The house was both an outgrowth of the new Fritz B. Burns Research Division that Burns had established to guide his postwar housing developments and an interim promotional step toward his development of the production-based Kaiser Homes.[5] Using the automobile and nascent aerospace industries as his business model, Burns established the Division as a "research and development" arm for his housing projects. Even before the war, Burns had looked to the automobile industry for inspiration. He adopted a "chassis approach" to home building that utilized a standardized floor plan and gave the exteriors a more individualized look.[6] In 1945, he joined with Kaiser Steel to create production-built homes using manufacturing principles from the steel industry. Between fall of 1946 and spring of 1947, 2,000 "Kaiser Homes" by the Kaiser-Burns partnership were erected.[7] The partnership was inspirational for later developers who acknowledged their desire to create a merchant-builder business model akin to "The General Motors of Housing."[8]

The Post War House was covered in-depth by the local, regional, and national media. An entire issue of *House Beautiful* (May 1946) was devoted to it. It even received coverage in the business media, which was rare at the time for a piece of residential architecture.[9] Over 1 million tickets were sold to visit the house.[10] Product manufacturers leveraged the Post War House in trade and consumer advertising campaigns.[11] It is, therefore, not surprising that one of the earliest architect-developer collaborations to be widely promoted in the media was Kaiser Homes in Panorama City, by Wurdeman and Becket, beginning in December of 1948.[12]

Positioned as "Homes for the Thrifty," the ads tout Wurdeman and Becket as "nationally famous architects" with an ability to "attractively and skillfully interpret" the "indoor and outdoor living" demanded by "young and modern America."[13] A simple box-shaped plan with hipped roof, Kaiser Homes had "the clean, simple lines and good form" of the "new look in architecture."[14] The houses featured a single, large picture window on the rear elevation clearly intended as the "modern" element. Subsequent ads in the campaign established what would soon be a common pattern among developers: featuring specific models (e.g., "The Californian") that would leverage the state's increasingly national profile as the ideal for modern, casual, postwar family living. By the end of 1949, early Mid-Century Modern designed houses in Sunnyvale, California by Joseph Eichler's Eichler Homes had appeared in *Life*, *Look*, *House Beautiful*, *Sunset* and *House and Home* magazines.[15]

The dichotomy of consumer preferences for modernistic "miracle houses" vs. the "house as we have known it," is evident in the designs for Southern California throughout the 1950s. Stylistically, the vast majority of subdivisions built high

concentrations of the Ranch or the Contemporary Ranch styles, not the post-and-beam aesthetic featured in the Case Study House Program or promoted by Eichler. However, even contemporary house designs that drew from historical motifs featured styling cues that prospective buyers were coming to associate with a modern, California-based style of living. These included "walls of glass," "patios" and "modern appliances." Even materials such as "California Redwood" were emphasized in promotional efforts — not for their durability, but to enhance the credibility of these homes as authentically Californian.

The appeal of the new modern California architecture as a driver of foot traffic to model homes cannot be overstated. Even for subdivisions in which the vast majority of home styles available or constructed as part of the actual product mix were Ranch homes, the advertising emphasis favored Mid-Century Modern models. In the case of Northridge's Storybook Village tract, ad after ad visually featured contemporary modern designs, however, the percentage of these designs constructed was far outpaced by more Traditional Ranch-style homes.[16]

The link between merchant-builders/developers and "architects" was a tenuous one. By 1956, Arthur B. Gallion, Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California indicated that, "Only about 2,000 builders and developers of new homes in the United States regularly use the services of an architect and more than half of these are in Southern California. As a result, Southland homes top the nation in design."[17] Many merchant builders worked with "in-house" architect designers rather than state-licensed members of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in independent practice. The former offered builders the opportunity to promote their

plans and model home styles as "architect designed" even if the architect was not well-known or well-paid for his efforts. Use of the latter group indicated a builder who sought some degree of credibility in design, plan or promotional efforts. This was encouraged by the AIA itself, which during this period launched a public awareness campaign enumerating the benefits of selecting a home or building a home with a licensed member of the AIA.

In 1950, the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects announced the formation of a committee of five architects to work with Southern California's merchant builders to plan how architects and developers could work more cost efficiently together on low-cost and "mass housing."[18] Architect George A. Riddle was charged with working on a national level, along with Welton Becket, Edward H. Fickett, Adrian Wilson, and Lucille Bryant Rappaport on a local level.[19]

AIA members who worked with residential developers and merchant builders in Southern California during the 1950s included William Bray, William Krisel, Dan Saxon Palmer, David Freedman, Edward H. Fickett, Herman Charles Light, Hugh Gibbs, William Cody, and David Freedman.

Between the end of World War II and 1960, merchant builders were divided into two categories: those who focused on one or two extra-large subdivisions at a time (e.g., Levitt and Sons) and those who primarily built multiple subdivisions within the same region (e.g., Eichler Homes, Volk-McClain, Ray Hommes Builders, Pioneer Land Company, Devon Construction Company, Weber-Burns, Larwin Company, Biltmore Homes, Alexander Construction Company, Linkletter Homes, and many others).[20] Southern California also was home to hundreds of less-formal, independent developers

who focused on smaller developments at irregular intervals. Subdivisions tended to fall into four general sizes: less than 50 homes, 51-149 homes, 150-299 homes, and more than 300 homes. Larger developments were usually opened in phases or "units" to avoid high capital investments and build sales momentum. Initially, Los Angeles area merchant builders employed a "joint venture" business strategy generating investment capital through a variety of wealthy investors, especially those in the movie business.[21] Once builders established successful track records, developers were able to borrow money from financial institutions, enabling larger projects and the establishment of corporations.

By the mid-1950s, merchant builders with multiple sub-divisions in a region were actively "branding" their offerings with standardized marketing and merchandising techniques that built awareness and confidence among the home-buying public. Frequently, however, these branding techniques had nothing to do with the architect/interior designer teams that the builders hired. It was quite commonplace for merchant builders who hired independent architects to design their homes, to hire different architects for different subdivisions. In addition to knowledge of the economics of real estate, design and construction efficiencies, the key to a merchant builder's success included understanding the competitive environment in each new area. Understanding consumer preferences, appropriate price points, and home types available in the area led to the development of different housing "product lines." Different subdivisions were even developed in the same area by the same developer to capture the full spectrum of market potential. For example, Larwin Company, offered three Covina developments almost simultaneously in 1954-55: Arrow Park, Arrow

Wood, and Arrow Square — the latter two developments aimed at a more affluent customer with prices $1,000-$2,000 greater than Arrow Park.[22]

An example of the branded development model was the series of "Award Homes" by Volk-McClain Company. By the mid-1950s, Volk-McClain Award Homes were developed for Buena Park, Covina, Azusa, Wilmington, Norwalk, Garden Grove, and many other communities in the Los Angeles area. These developments typically consisted of between 125 and 200 residences per subdivision. They were two- or three-bedroom economy homes of 1,200 square feet or under-priced at less than $8,000.[23] Each Award Home came with a "Certificate of High Quality" issued by the developer that certified "…every detail of your new home — workmanship, construction, quality of materials — equals or actually surpasses the rigid specifications set up for the Award Homes."[24] With both the standards and certificates established by the developers themselves, only a savvy buyer could identify that the homes had not won any "awards" at all. Ultimately, in 1955 the Chapman Gardens development earned Volk-McClain and architect Edward Fickett a National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) award and consumers could, at last, find truth in advertising. By 1959, Volk-McClain had built 3,100 homes in Southern California and annual sales topped $30 million.[25] Volk-McLain, went on to build other product lines in other markets with other architects under the name Volk–McClain Communities. Other examples of branded merchant-built homes included "Blue Ribbon Homes" by Weber-Burns Company and Midland "Style-Setter Homes" by Art Linkletter. By September 1955, Midland had five separate tracts for sale: two in Fullerton, one in La Mirada, and two in the San Fernando Valley.[26]

A key factor in the architect-merchant builder relationship was the favorable loan terms created by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the GI Bill of Rights, and the subsequent alterations to these programs. Originally established by President Roosevelt as a Depression-Era New Deal program in 1934, FHA-insured loans didn't have much impact until after World War II. Whereas home loans had previously required 20-30% down and a repayment period of eight to ten-years, FHA terms were much more agreeable: approximately 10% down, twenty to thirty-year terms, and interest rates of five percent rather than the more common eight percent.[27] The FHA insurance program also served to standardize loan terms by superseding inconsistent state laws.[28] In addition to providing federal funding for returning servicemen's education, small business start-ups and farm loans, the GI Bill also enabled veterans to obtain inexpensive home loans by having the Veterans Administration (VA) insure them for the lending institutions. Terms were 4.0% amortized over twenty or twenty-five-years. The insurance payment was also waived for returning GIs. The net result was that in Los Angeles in 1952, for example, a veteran could obtain a three-bedroom Volk-McClain Award Home for $299 down and payments of $58 per month.[29]

To obtain the loans, however, the FHA and VA required that home plans conform to FHA's established "Minimum Property Standards." The Standards were very conservative and did not allow for many of the architectural elements advocated by modern architects of the day,[30] such as designs with flat roofs and slab on grade floor. According to Ned Eichler, son of developer Joseph Eichler, "regional offices had some leniency based on local customs and climate."[31] However, many architects and homeowners of the period who were building custom homes expressed frustration over

banks being unwilling to lend for modern designs. An east coast example of this occurred when the FHA's rejection of architect Charles M. Goodman's flat-roof design for his homes at the 1951 Wheatoncrest subdivision in Wheaton, Maryland required that a pitched roof be installed.[32] Smart merchant builders obtained FHA approval for their plans/designs prior to development. It is not surprising, therefore, that the designs for homes in the early tracts are more conservative and lack architectural experimentation. As will be seen later, some developers did not seek FHA financing. By October of 1949, however, more than 800 tracts had been approved by the appraisal section of the VA.[33]

The sheer volume of loans made across the country and specifically in Los Angeles was staggering. By 1949, applications were being received in the Los Angeles area at the average rate of 50 per day.[34] By 1950, loan financing through the VA hit the $10 billion mark *nationally* with loan applications at a rate of 40,000 per month.[35] Approximately 4% of those applications came from the Los Angeles area— at a time when Los Angeles County accounted for only 2.7% of the national population.[36]

In 1950, at the beginning of the Korean War, however, the government applied credit controls to GI loans as an anti-inflationary measure.[37] Restrictions were eased in 1952 when new regulations reduced the down payment from 8% to 5% for veterans.[38] On a $12,000 house, for example, this cut the required cash investment from $960 to $500 overnight. Merchant builders took full advantage of these new terms, advertising heavily.

While the provisions of the GI Bill are most closely associated with the veterans of World War II, benefits were quickly extended to men who served their country in the 1950-1953 Korean conflict. On April 25 1953 the credit controls on GI loans came to an

end. The government offered new flexibility as to how to apply the 4% "gratuity" and loan terms were extended from twenty or twenty-five to thirty years.[39] The net effect of this was that GI loans could now be obtained with no down payment at all. This was important as increasing land prices and construction costs drove up housing prices and demand for larger, three- and four-bedroom models was increasing. In the Parkwood La Mirada development, for example, a three-or four-bedroom home with two baths dropped from a veteran price of $360 down and $68.48 per month, to $0 down and a similar monthly payment.[40] As a result, sales soared and the VA guaranteed 320,000 new home loans nationally in 1953 alone.[41] In 1954, the Los Angeles VA office surpassed the administration of 250,000 GI loan guarantees at a value in excess of $2 billion— the highest number of loans and overall value of any regional VA office in the country.[42]

In 1955, the FHA and VA imposed restrictions on credit ending the no-down payment terms and reducing loan terms from thirty to twenty-five years.[43] This made homes more expensive for buyers. In accordance with two recessions during the period (July 1953-May 1954) and (August 1957-April 1958),[44] consumer confidence dipped.[45] Merchant builders responded by becoming more competitive in the mid-to late-1950s — using architecture, luxury detailing, landscaping, appliances, and other amenities to differentiate their product offerings.

One strategy was to increase the appearance of customization. Partially a reaction to the early "faceless" suburbs typified by Levittown and a growing consumer culture attuned to fashion, new automobile models, and a growing sense of personal identity, merchant builders began to increase the number of options available within tracts. As *Los Angeles Times* writer Dan Mac Masters wrote in hindsight, "Early tract

development had two to four floor plans with practically no options or extras. The customer could take his choice in the 1950s between the cheap but faceless house and the relatively costly architect-designed house. There was no middle ground."[46] For example, in the 140-unit Alondra Village (1953), the average plan-to-development ratio was 35:1 with an exterior ratio of 20:1.[47] In contrast, in the 1954-55 299-unit Parkwood Estates tract, the plan-to-development ratio was about the same at 37:1, but the exterior ratio was reduced by two-thirds to 7:1.[48] During this period, architects also began to take more responsibility for the planning and layout of the developments. In the early days, developers hired an engineer to layout the streets, lots, utilities, etc.[49] As architects became more involved in the planning phase, placement of house and garage/carport on the lots became more varied enhancing the visual cadence of the streetscapes and creating more privacy for homeowners.

Another strategy was the integration of more modern architectural elements into the designs. Through cooperative efforts by architects, the FHA gradually expanded the Standards to accommodate more modern design. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Times changed, competition forced some tract builders to experiment gingerly with better design, and it worked."[50] By 1955, the Northern California-based Eichler Homes had proven that avant-garde modern design could turn a profit and relatively high volumes.[51] Moreover, Mid-Century Modern homes began being recognized with awards with the establishment of the annual "Homes for Better Living Awards" by the builder's bible, *House and Home* magazine. By the mid-1950s, Los Angeles was beginning to see its own crop of Mid-Century Modern-focused tracts as well as the inclusion of avant-garde Modern homes in multi-styled subdivisions. The Alexander Construction Company

became a local leader in developments featuring modern architecture. The company's developments included Corbin Palms in Reseda (1954-5) and two modern tracts in Palm Springs: Twin Palms (1956) and Racquet Club Road Estates (1959-1962). Other developers who picked up the modern trend included Sanford D. Adler's Living Conditioned Homes (1957-9) in Northridge, Julian Weinstock's Northridge College Estates (1958-1962), GMB Homes (1958) in West Los Angeles, and the Pardee-Phillips Construction Company's Southdown Estates in Pacific Palisades (1953).

Further evidence of this trend can be seen in the mid-to late-1950s tracts by the longtime Los Angeles developer Elwain Steinkamp. During the 1920s, Steinkamp created pre-designed and standardized Spanish Colonial Revival tracts in the Crenshaw area and in Beverlywood. In the 1950s, Steinkamp's Sherwood Park development, while not a production-built tract, prominently featured Mid-Century Modern speculative homes as the "models" for his development including one model labeled "Extreme Modern."[52] Another example of this tactic is the Westridge Riviera development by James E. Hilliard. Hilliard tapped into the public's interest in the launch of Sputnik and subsequent "space race," by developing a showcase house known as "The Space Hut." The speculative home "designed for men from outer space," featured "dressetories, jet port, observatory, and moon pool" along with a flaming flying saucer water feature.[53] Over 10,000 people toured the Space Hut.[54] Therefore, developers that focused their business model on speculative houses and undeveloped parcel sales were no less concerned with the house as a product than were their merchant-builder competitors. Economy and efficiency in construction were still keys to maximizing profits and in addition to being saleable products themselves the spec houses played an important role

in marketing: they attracted potential buyers. In a region where model home touring and showcase houses were becoming a source of weekend entertainment for the public, developers needed speculative houses to generate awareness and draw foot traffic. Potential buyers then had the option of visualizing themselves in the speculative house or imagining a dream house of their own design. Regardless, the speculative house became an important roadside attraction for the buying public.

A final strategy for competitive advantage in a tighter housing market was the development and marketing of amenities along with aggressive promotions. Merchant builders used a wide range of amenities to encourage foot traffic and sales in their communities including intercom systems, free 21" Westinghouse built-in television sets, yards of carpet, landscaping, and irrigation. Another promotion included the marketing of an unfinished bedroom and bathroom as a "Do-It-Yourself" opportunity at Covina Gardens.[55]

In the period between 1945-1959, the plan of the average tract house underwent several changes in overall size, room composition, and the spatial relationships between rooms. Based on demand and the economics of building, the early postwar tract houses were primarily two bedrooms, one bath, with kitchen, living room, and dining alcove. The garage was replaced by a carport as a cost- savings measure. These basics were replicated nationwide from Levittown, Pennsylvania to Reseda, California.[56] The 1949 Levitt model accomplished all of this in 700 square feet of living space on a 6,000 square foot lot.[57] As the 1950s progressed, and demand for larger homes grew, three- and four-bedroom homes (or three bedroom plus den) became commonplace along with two bathrooms. Average square footage steadily increased over the decade, as did lot size.

Many San Fernando Valley lots in the 7,000 and 8,000 square foot range became popular with developers and provided opportunity for developers to showcase "the long low look" or the "big look" that had become popular with consumers for contemporary or modern Ranch style homes.[58]

During the 1950s, merchant-built housing also began to see the evolution of new room/space types including the family room and the atrium. Family rooms, both popular with the public and celebrated by the Homes For Better Living Awards of 1956, had been integrated into medium-priced homes as early as 1950 with architect Robert Anshen's designs for Joseph Eichler.[59] Family rooms responded to the new, informal living patterns of America's postwar families[60] — included congregating around the television and eating "TV dinners." By 1955, for developers to remain competitive, a family room had become a must-have feature of a tract house plan.[61] Likewise, the kitchen grew in importance during this period as the nucleus of the housewife's domain and location of new technology-driven appliances designed to ease the burdens of cooking and cleaning in the postwar servantless household. A headline for a 1946 Gas Company advertisement read "Plan for These Modern Servants" which reveal the "servants" to be an all-gas water heater and jet-propelled dishwasher.[62] During the 1950s, the placement of the kitchen within the plan of tract houses also began to change. Previously relegated to the perimeter of the typical plan, the kitchen began to migrate to the center of the house. One of the earliest instances of this is found in Whitney R. Smith's plan for Case Study House #12 (1946), which unlike the other Case Study Houses of the period, places the kitchen at the very center of an X-shaped plan.[63] Although the overall plan of the house draws more from Frank Lloyd Wright's pinwheel

plans than from the efficiencies of production housing, it clearly establishes the kitchen as the hearth of postwar living in America. The concept was later adopted and used extensively by A. Quincy Jones, who partnered with Smith in the firm Smith, Jones and Contini between 1948 and 1950.[64] Repositioning the kitchen at the heart of the plan, combined with opening it up to living, dining, and family rooms whenever possible met the dual objectives of making small spaces appear larger through visually borrowing light from adjacent rooms and allowing the housewife to keep watchful eye on her children. In his book *Builders' Homes for Better Living,* Jones identifies "the location of the kitchen as the home's work center and control unit" as one of five essential relationships important to a good house plan.[65] In addition to Smith and Jones, east-coast architect Charles Goodman won Homes for Better Living Awards for two 1957 merchant-built entries that place the kitchen directly at the center of the plan.[66] Plans that combined the central placement of the kitchen with a central utility core for bathrooms and service areas served both to enhance the quality of living and reduced building costs through the consolidation of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.

Another important development in modern tract-house planning was the creation of the atrium— the collaborative effort of Robert Anshen and A. Quincy Jones for Eichler Homes in 1958.[67] According to Ned Eichler, author and son of the developer Joseph Eichler, Jones took Anshen's initial atrium plan and expanded it.[68] Part processional surprise, part transitional space from the sidewalk to the front door, part children's play area and circulation space between rooms, the atrium became a signature element of Eichler Homes. Ironically, architect William Krisel had been unsuccessful in encouraging his developers to use atria as early as 1958.[69] Although used widely in their

Northern California tracts, when the Eichler entered the market in Southern California in 1960, the development was noted as "The First Tract With an Atrium."[70] The atrium embodied the ideal of informal indoor-outdoor living in California.

The trend toward "more houses wrapped around outdoor living" was just one of the design trends for a "bustling market" identified in the July 1966 issue of *House & Home* magazine.[71] Others included the use of exterior grillwork or concrete block, interior brick, room dividers, more built-in furniture and plywood paneling to finish walls. Virtually all of these trends had their genesis on the drawing boards of architects who worked with developers in Southern California.

The development of the suburbs was made possible by city zoning and planning administrators who recognized the opportunities and paved the way for development. According to Ned Eichler, "California led the way in making zoning and infrastructure. What could take years in other states could take weeks in California."[72] A good example of this is the city of La Mirada. The 2,300-acre former McNally Ranch was purchased in December of 1952 for $5,000,000. Within two weeks, a rezoning hearing provided residential, commercial, and light industrial zones, roads and infrastructure.[73] By January 22 1953, a groundbreaking on the new $150,000,000 "planned city" for 10,000 homes was held.[74] In approximately six weeks time, the City of La Mirada was born. By July, the first industrial building began to rise, and the first model homes were previewed.[75] In 1954, La Mirada took the unusual measure of establishing a civic council for "architectural and quality control of home building."[76] The council set high standards for quality of construction. Builders' plans were subject to review by the council and only those that passed were allowed to display the La Mirada "Quality

Controlled" seal.[77] As Eichler described, "California became sophisticated very quickly. Clear procedures were quickly established, cities and counties created planning departments and planning commissions that reviewed proposals, held public hearings, etc."[78]

Speed and efficiency in construction were keys to being a successful merchant builder. The architects who worked with developers had to be facile in the techniques, technologies, materials, and processes used by the builders. Merchant builders' production and construction methods were based on Henry Ford's assembly line and filtered through the lens of the war effort and the Southern California defense industry. The merchant builders borrowed four basic elements from these factory models: 1) prefabrication and assembly techniques, 2) specialization, 3) innovative materials and 4) the adaptation of new tools.

First, merchant builders experimented with a variety of production techniques including the construction of some modules in factories, on-site fabrication in staging areas, and site-specific finishing. One example is the "chassis" technique used by Fritz Burns in his Kaiser Homes which, as previously discussed, not only allowed for the customization of exterior styling, but provided building efficiencies not previously utilized in the industry. Dividing homebuilding into "…a factory and field method that allows for a standardized interior or chassis, thus reducing time and expense," Burns produced the chassis in a factory and added the exterior in the field.[79] As early as 1948, "on-site fabrication and pre-assembly" was employed by the tract developers and was becoming known as "the California Plan of construction…since it originated in this State (sic) and since it has been adopted throughout the nation."[80] Even smaller builders were

able to take advantage of these efficiencies by using small shops at the construction site or nearby to precut lumber, generate floor and roof panels, plumbing assemblies, and door or window installations.[81]

Second, the builders determined they could increase speed and efficiency of construction by increasing specialization among work crews, especially in the carpentry trades. However, increased specialization demanded higher volumes to avoid wasteful downtime.[82] As such, smaller homebuilders found it difficult to benefit from specialized work crews.[83]

A third common aspect of postwar building by merchant builders was the use of new innovative materials that resulted from the war effort. Looking to Burns again, the Kaiser Homes made liberal use of "plywood bonded to lumber framing…used successfully in the mosquito bomber during the war."[84] A material fabricated in the factory, plywood was used by Burns for its waterproofing and insulating properties.[85] This enabled him to further streamline home construction.[86] The lightweight aluminum alloys used during wartime also became commonplace in such standardized building products of the period as garage doors, windows, doors and door frames, flashing, roofing, siding and ornamental metalwork.[87]

Lastly, much like thousands of "Rosie the Riveters" did during the war, builders availed themselves of the tools and machines developed to speed war production — including power tools. As H. Cedric Roberts, Chairman of the Home Builders Institute described, "Postwar builders use power tools, cutting tables, jigs and power saws to accomplish work formerly done by hand."[88] The net effect was that these machines made construction more efficient and, thereby, less expensive. The use of power tools to

speed up construction was, in fact, the key factor identified by a British plumbing and heating contractor who made a six-week study of American construction methods in 1949.[89] Because of the low capital investment, power tools were an efficiency measure that could be employed by even the smaller builders. Ultimately power tools would go on to fuel a "Do-It-Yourself" (DIY) movement across the nation, creating a generation of home handymen and a viable business model for the sale of DIY tools and products. Aside from hand tools, larger earthmoving equipment developed for wartime purposes was also employed in the creation of streets, trenches and sewers.[90]

Because of the sheer volume of building in Southern California, a variety of building-product suppliers established themselves in the area. This resulted in a wide range of local materials at reasonable prices (without the heavy freight and transportation charges incurred by builders outside the region). Local suppliers included Rocklite Products (cement blocks), Lam-Loc (laminated beams), Arcadia Metal Products (windows and doors), and Malarkey Plywood (plywood), California Redwood Association (wood), Gruen Lighting, Alsynite Company of America (translucent fiberglass) and many, many others. All of the major trade organizations were represented in Southern California as well.

In retrospect, the postwar period neither yielded "the miracle house" by which architecture would permanently change the way that Americans lived, nor did we simply go back to the historicized styles and house plans "as we knew them" that romanticized but limited our interactions with the California landscape. The true meaning of the miracle house turned out to be the ability of a generation of average Americans to purchase and own a home of their own — a phenomenon foreign to the

years before World War II and one increasingly out of reach for the average Californian today. The California Ranch-style home and the Mid-Century Modern home became the predominant styles of the period with a freer plan, wide expanses of glass, and patios. They became the quintessential products of merchant-built housing in California and spread like a wave across the nation. The merchant-built developments between 1945-1959 forever changed the Southern California landscape.

After A Decade, Two Cultures At Odds: Architects and Developers

A review of trade literature from the mid- to late-1950s reveals that a schism developed between architects and developers during the postwar period. While the tenuous architect/contractor relationship had long suffered from the financial implications of visioning vs. making, the application of technology and manufacturing culture to the building profession exacerbated the difference. Architectural visions of a postwar utopia seemed all but dashed when Levittown was built and "architects accused merchant builders of creating dreary, monotonous, no privacy—future slums."[91] The result, as described in the March/April 1955 *Bulletin of the American Institute of Architects*, was that "There has always been a stigma placed on the Merchant Builder (sic) by the architectural profession."[92]

The essence of the stigma came from the seemingly irreconcilable differences between the two cultures. As described by a *successful* architect who worked for merchant builders, A. Quincy Jones, this was a "…feeling of mutual distrust and indifference" between the developer and architect.[93] The nature of this distrust was summarized as follows:

> During the past several years many hours have been wasted in the good old arguments of "The builders are too cheap to buy good architectural services" and "The architects are dreamers and won't stoop to designing low-cost housing." And many more word battles as stupid as these out of which neither builder nor architect gains much-needed services that each can render to the other.[94]

So prevalent was the stereotype that A. Quincy Jones portrayed it graphically in a cartoon (see Figure 1:1) in his 1957 book, *Builders' Homes for Better Living*.

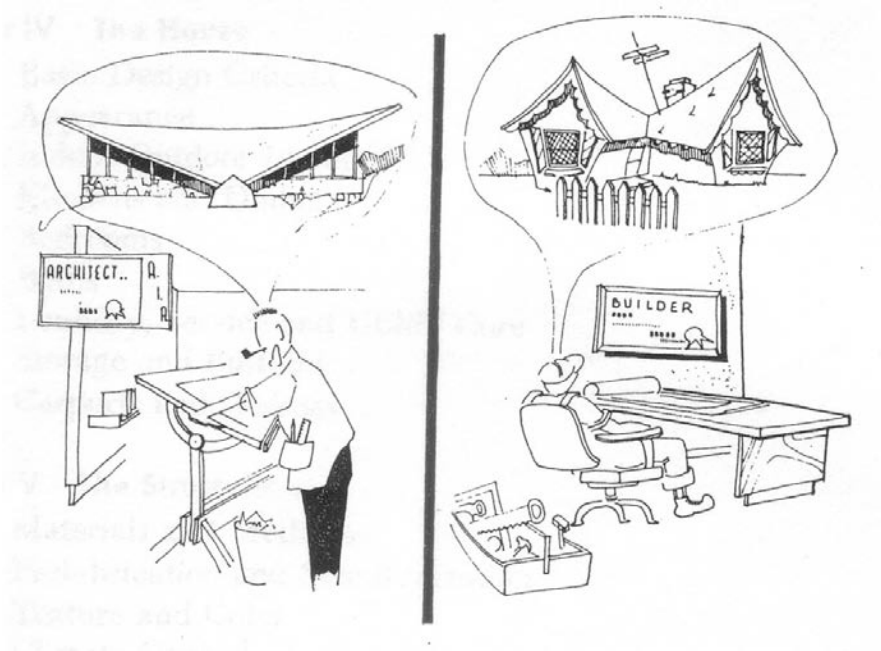

Figure 1:1 Cartoon featured in A. Quincy Jones' book, *Builders' Homes for Better Living.* Cartoon drawn by Rudy Veland. Used with permission of the artist.

Jones thoughtfully elaborated on the differences between the two cultures:

> Builders, in general, are indifferent to progressive design on the theory that they are in business to sell houses, and not to finance the education of the buying public's taste to a point above the general level of acceptance. They are therefore suspicious of the architects' attempts at improvement which may prove costly to build and limited in appeal. Many architects on the other hand, find it difficult to adapt their designs to accommodate the methods and skills of the merchant builder. They fail to appreciate the tremendous potentialities inherent in an industry which builds four out of five houses erected in this country.[95]

The aforementioned *AIA Bulletin* article called for both parties to listen to one another, and above all, for architects to think like salespeople. However, a full reading of Jones' thoughtful book shows that the secret of his success lay in understanding the needs of the builder, making them his own, and speaking the language of merchant builders (often in financial terms) to persuade them toward his ideas. Jones also correctly identifies the need for better education of the "lenders, appraisers, and governmental agencies" that fail to give adequate credit to good design.[96]

Likewise, William Krisel recalls an unspoken "pecking order" among architects within the AIA that valued "government work and schools" followed by commercial commissions, single-family residences, and "tract homes were at the bottom."[97]

Despite this cross-cultural dysfunction between and within the professions, some architects developed long productive relationships with developers in the 1950s that lasted into the 1970s. As the economic, sociological, and political environment changed during the new decade, developers and their architects changed with the times.

1960-1973: The Commoditization of Houses

By 1960, 70% of all housing sales nationally were by merchant builders producing 100+ units per year. [98] However, the ensuing decade and the years up until the oil crisis and recession of the 1970s would bring many changes to developers and the architects who worked with them. Changing demographics, economic cycles, and evolving consumer preferences would all play a role in shaping the built environment during the period including the creation of new ownership structures in multi-family residential building types such as the condominium.

Postwar prosperity and the population boom had negative repercussions on Southern California. In the January 1960 issue of *Changing Times* magazine, an article appeared entitled "That California Way of Life." "Ah California!," the article begins, "Land of easy, outdoor living. Sunny days and balmy winters. Beaches, mountains, deserts in the back yard." The tone quickly turns dark, however. "*Ugh*, California! Land of smog and clogged freeways. High taxes, high prices. People without roots, restless, tempted to live beyond their means in the pursuit of pleasure."[99] The article goes on to profile the Stanleys, a real family that had recently relocated from Illinois to Encino, who purchased a tract home just five years prior and are depicted as alternately living the promise of California lifestyle and finding themselves faced with high costs of living, traffic congestion, and pollution. A sidebar in the article details how "Scads of appealing 'tract homes' as Californians call bug subdivisions, are available on easy terms" and how a cousin of the Stanleys has decided to purchase one. "Ed Stanley has convinced Bill he can live in the house for four or five years, sell at a fat profit and trade up to a bigger home."[100]

Housing prices in Southern California were indeed rising. A 1959 member survey by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) found that the majority of builders were selling homes at a price between $13,000 and $20,000.[101] The survey also identified the top challenges facing builders as: available land at a reasonable price, availability of mortgage financing, and the high cost of construction.[102] In the Los Angeles area, much of the available flat land from which one could easily commute to downtown and new industrial centers had been developed during the 1950s. By 1961, for example, the San Fernando Valley had a population larger than the individual cities

Washington, DC, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Boston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, or New Orleans.[103] In response, developers began to look to the previously undeveloped hills in and around Los Angeles for their new tracts. In 1964, estimates of the Los Angeles County land available for urbanization quantified this dilemma; 20% were level, 21% were "hilly" and 59% were mountains.[104]

Changes in area zoning, city grading requirements, and new techniques in contouring developed by the Janss Corporation, led to hillside developments in Baldwin Hills, Hollywood, Pacific Palisades, Beverly Hills, Reseda, Granada Hills, and many other locations throughout Southern California. Hillside developments were consistently marketed for their close-in locations, views, and superior air quality in a city that had become synonymous with the term "smog."[105] Given the higher costs associated with grading, hillside developments necessitated higher prices and offered amenities such as underground utilities. These developments attracted upper-middle and upper-class homebuyers. As noted in the *Los Angeles Times*, "It is the fullest flowering of the housing tract. But instead of appealing to young GI families, as did the first tracts after World War II, [a hillside tract] appeals to young, affluent Californians."[106] Examples of such developments included Baldwin Hills Estates, Trousdale Estates, Mount Olympus, Rancho Nob Hill, Sunset Hills, Beverly Glen Park, Mandeville West, and The Summits.

Rising development costs, fewer first-time homebuyers and changing consumer preferences resulted in architects designing larger merchant-built homes with more amenities. The *Los Angeles Times* observed this phenomenon in 1961:

> When the post-war (sic) building boom began, the majority of tracts were priced from $8,000-$12,000 per house. For the lower figure, the buyer got two bedrooms, a living room with dining area off it, a radiant-type wall heater and a single car garage…Today the comparable price range is from $14,000-$20,000. Today's lower figure gets buyers three bedrooms, a bath and a half, or two, a two-car garage, a forced-air furnace, and at least 200 square feet more of living space.[107]

These trends continued throughout the decade. As described by architect Edward H. Fickett, "Builders once made bathrooms 8'x10,' now we make them 10'x12.' Once a closet was 4' and now we design 10' of wardrobe."[108] Other evolutions in plan included the development of the "master suite" in which the owner's bedroom increased in square footage, enjoyed private bathroom access, and was sometimes set apart from other bedrooms in the plan. The family room also continued to grow in size and emphasize a program that focused more on entertainment for family members and less on work-related tasks.[109]

One of the innovations of the period in merchant-built housing was "the walled-lot house." As the name implies, each house stands on a lot that is partially or completely walled in. A house is then built with one side right on the lot line. The result is that space normally allotted for setbacks is incorporated into usable patios.[110] Because the walls provide privacy, all rooms could be oriented to the exterior— an evolution of the indoor-outdoor experience synonymous with California living. Further, the appropriation of outdoor space for more rooms gave the houses a more spacious feeling architecturally. For the builder, it also meant tighter, more land efficient grouping of houses to maximize profits. The invention of the walled lot house is attributed to "the innovation-minded West Coast."[111] Examples of successful walled-lot subdivisions included developer Harlan Lee's Westlake Village (1967) by architects Robert E. Jones and Edwin K. Hom, a Donald Bren development (circa 1968) in Valencia by Edward C.

Malone, and another Jones and Hom designed subdivision in Huntington Beach (1967) for Deane Brothers.

Last but not least, architects working for merchant builders during this period also began to implement cluster plans. These plans involve grouping several single-family residences, semi-attached homes, or other living units "around motor courts operating off of central traffic spines."[112] Such planning offered the opportunity to integrate large landscaped areas, avoid the linear, repetitive architectural cadence that had become synonymous with 1950s tract housing, and create a sense of community among the clustered units. An award-winning example of this style of development and architectural possibility can be found in Burde, Shaw and Associates' design for Spyglass Development at Pebble Beach.[113] Other examples include Newport Crest Condominiums (1973) by Richard Dorman and Associates in Newport Beach, and Beverly Glen Canyon (1976) by Barry A. Berkus.

Another byproduct of the lack of land availability was the expansion of merchant builders geographically to the far northern and southern areas of Southern California. In the 1960s and early 1970s, merchant building activity increased in San Diego, Orange County, and the edges of the north San Fernando Valley (e.g., Westlake Village and the Conejo Valley). The presence of more affluent buyers combined with lower land prices also encouraged merchant builders to build in weekend vacation destinations such as Palm Springs, Borrego Springs, San Diego, and Northern San Diego County.

The final byproduct of the lack of land availability was high-density development. Many merchant builders turned away from single-family residential products and asked their architect partners to begin to design high-rise apartment

complexes and condominiums. Eichler Homes diversified in San Francisco with the Laguna Eichler Apartments (1963) designed by Jones and Emmons and Laguna Heights Apartments (1964) by Claude Oakland.[114] In contrast, Eli Broad, for example, made semi-attached townhouses his product line of choice.[115] The introduction of the condominium concept occurred in the early 1960s. However, a lack of financing for the new ownership concept suppressed development until 1964. In 1961, the FHA was authorized to insure mortgages on condos for 85% of the appraised value. However, it wasn't until September 1963 that tax appraisal methods for condominium was settled and developers began building condominiums in force.[116] The concept of private ownership and association maintenance dues was a foreign one that required extensive marketing, but appealed to an increasing number of postwar homeowners who had become "empty nesters" (i.e., couples whose children had grown up and moved out). They sought freedom from the chores and upkeep associated with a house as well as the ability to "get more dwelling for the money than from a house."[117] For high-density developments community features such as pools, tennis courts, gymnasiums, and clubhouses also became important amenities.

High-density development was also fueled by an increase in community redevelopment projects in cities across Southern California that sought to eliminate blighted areas and support growth. Such programs were often associated with gentrification and the displacement of low-income populations. Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Monica are all examples of where urban renewal projects yielded high-density, high-rise development for merchant builders and the architects who worked with them. The trend continued throughout the period and whereas California housing

starts of five or more units only accounted for 29% of the overall starts in 1960, by 1972 they accounted for 44% of the overall starts in the state.[118]

The effects of higher priced and less available land also manifested themselves in the development of more two-story houses by merchant builders. The long-low silhouettes of the 1950s Ranch houses gave way to smaller lots and the need for more square footage. The result: more split-level and two-story development. This trend was exemplified by such tracts as architect William Bray's Garden Park Estates (1961) in Garden Grove, the multi-architect designed Huntington Harbour (1962) in Huntington Beach, and Art Linkletter-Stan Swartz's Mandeville West (1964) in Brentwood by Judson W. Pittman.

The movement toward new development types was also fueled by a significant change in the merchant-builder industry: the transition from family-owned companies to publically owned corporations. Backed by income statements showing profits during the previous decades, merchant builders started "going public" in the early 1960s. Eichler Homes was the first to go public in 1959 with a $300,000 stock offering that, in turn, assisted in raising $2 million in corporate bonds.[119] In 1963, seventeen merchant builders had their first public stock offering, and by 1972, forty-one companies related to land development, home manufacturing, or apartment building had gone public either through merger or through an initial public offering.[120]

As previously mentioned, many developers and merchant builders diversified their single-family residential product offerings through the construction of multi-family residential types such as apartments and condominiums. However, this was not the only means of diversification for merchant builders. As early as the mid-1950s, developer

Fritz Burns diversified into hotels and commercial developments. Working with his longtime architect, Welton Becket, Burns created the Hawaiian Village Hotel (1957) in Honolulu and the Airport Marina Hotel (1962) in Los Angeles. Other developers like Larwin, Lyon and Pardee all diversified into commercial products, such as office buildings.[121] Retirement communities also became popular with developers. Del Webb Corporation senior housing projects appeared in Riverside as well as in Arizona. Ross Cortese's Leisure Worlds sprouted up in Laguna Beach and Long Beach. Still other developers, like John M. Stahl, increased their investments in industrial development. Merchant builders who elected to stay focused on the single-family residence, expanded into international markets: Levitt to France and Centex and Kaufman & Broad to Puerto Rico.[122] Despite these varied business strategies, of the seventeen merchant builders who went public in 1963, only nine were left by 1972.[123]

Aside from a brief uptick in 1963, the number of housing starts continually declined during the 1960s with the sharpest decline in early 1967. From an annual high of two million in 1950, 1960s housing starts only exceeded the one million mark in two years: 1960 and 1964.[124] The effect of the "1966 credit crunch" was to drive housing starts to their lowest point in over a decade — 1.25 million units.[125] From a regional perspective, housing starts in California followed the national trend, but with sharper fluctuations. Total housing starts began a steep decline in 1964 with starts down 15% from 304,208 starts in 1963 to 258,042 in 1964.[126] In an attempt to jump-start development and the economy, in 1965 the FHA loosened loan terms for veterans, but the effects on the market were nebulous. By 1966, California housing starts had dipped to 98,680 from a decade high of 304,208 just three years earlier.[127] Incentives for home ownership begun

with the GI Bill were now also coming to a close: the program officially ended on July 25, 1967.[128] During this period the FHA turned its attention towards favorable financing terms for the housing the elderly, the disabled, and low-income residents.

With fewer buyers at the entry-level, an excess supply of houses, and tighter lending operations, developers once again became more competitive in their product offerings. Customization opportunities among merchant-built product offerings increased. In 1965, Carl F. Kraatz, Executive Vice President of the Construction Industries Exposition, wrote that Southern California merchant builders were "leading the nation's industry" in customizing.[129] In 1966, the *Los Angeles Times* proclaimed, "What started as an experiment is now a full-fledged trend. Customization is here to stay."[130] During the 1960s, customization went far beyond increasing the plan-to-development ratio or the exterior-to-development ratio. This trend was exemplified by the practice of Ray Watt, one of the largest builders in Southern California. With tract offerings ranging from $20,000 to $40,000, the availability of customization options was positively correlated with the price point. For his houses of $27,000 and over the buyer could have "…practically anything [they] wanted."[131] As a result, Watt found that in many tracts there were changes in 80% of the houses.[132] However, because customization is antithetical to the efficiencies of the production house model, builders were more likely to do it for tracts where sales was moving slowly.[133] The sellers market of the 1950s transformed into a buyers market during the 1960s.

As another means of product differentiation, merchant builders of the 1960s were more likely to focus on Mid-Century Modern architectural styles than in the previous decade. As described in *House & Home* in 1964:

> Today's market for new housing consists of a series of smaller, specialized markets— like the market for good contemporary design. The smart builder will commission and use the kind of architectural skill needed to satisfy this market because some buyers can't be sold anything else.[134]

In 1965 the same magazine observed,

> The public has never been so responsive to the development of new architecture. In some areas, more and more buyers are buying good contemporary design— as much to express their own tastes and individuality as to satisfy any other need. And they are buying this good design in merchant-built houses…[135]

A number of builders including the Alexander Construction Company and Eichler, focused on tracts of exclusively, avant-garde Mid-Century Modern design showcasing the post-and-beam aesthetic. Still others, such as Art Linkletter and Stan Swartz's Mandeville West tract, included a high percentage of Mid-Century Modern models and produced units featuring flat roofs, minimal ornament, and open floor plans. Developers like Paul Trousdale, who had turned to the custom-house parcel sales for his Trousdale Estates, actively marketed the services of modern architects for purchasers of his lots. His ads featured the "Trousdale Quintet" of AIA member architects including A. Quincy Jones, Richard Dorman, Edward H. Fickett, William Stephenson and Rex Lotery.[136] The preference for Mid-Century Modern architectural styles was an appeal to a more upscale and more educated buyer. Buyers of Eichler homes in Northern California had long been correlated with young professionals who saw themselves as members of the "avant garde with upper-middle class taste without the upper-middle class income."[137] By the early 1970s the use of Mid-Century Modern forms by architects working for merchant builders passed from the post-and-beam aesthetic to a more regional modern architecture of wooden shed structures in the spirit of the acclaimed Sea Ranch condominiums by architect Charles Moore.

Where land was available, developers of the period also turned to the use of planned communities to provide more competitive products for consumers. Architects working with developers began to more actively participate in the master planning of these communities. One of the largest and most successful master-planned communities was Irvine. Made possible by the transformation of the Irvine Ranch that dated back to the days of the Ranchos, William Pereira and Associates was called upon to design a vision for the community in 1960.[138] Other architect-planned communities for developers during this period include Warner Ranch (1960) by A.C. Martin Jr., Conejo Ranch (1962) by Richard Dorman, Huntington Harbour (1960) by William Pereira and Associates, and Century City (1959-1960) by Welton Becket and Associates. Even further south, there was La Costa (1964) by Edward H. Fickett, and Avco Community Developers' Rancho Bernardo (1963). For architects, offering master planning services was a logical outgrowth of both their professional interests and the trend toward consolidation of services needed by developers. What had begun in the 1950s with architects taking a larger role in the siting and placement of model plans on lots, color coordination, interior design, and landscaping services had now come full circle to an integrated planning function. In many planned communities, especially those designed to be vacation destinations or retirement communities, a special emphasis was placed on common areas and amenities including clubhouses, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc..

Although a key factor in the early days of the merchant-built housing industry, innovative production technologies and materials were less influential during this period. The Korean War effort did not produce the scope and scale of technological innovations that World War II had. According to Ned Eichler, "…by the early 1960s the

very subject of technology was all but forgotten by merchant builders as they turned their attention to other matters."[139] Instead, technological building innovations of the 1960s lent themselves to large-scale projects, not to the individual tract house. Advances in slip-form and jumbo-form concrete construction techniques were applied to high-rise housing. A review of *House & Home*'s Homes for Better Living Awards for the decade show increased appreciation for the use of the steel frame and the openness in plan that could be achieved because of it. However, due to the high cost of steel, many of these award winners were high-end homes costing in excess of $25,000 and not mass production models.

The architects working with developers in Southern California between 1960 and 1973 included the continuation of the relationships formed during the 1950s by A. Quincy Jones, Welton Becket, Edward H. Fickett, William Krisel, and William Bray. They were supplemented with newcomers such as Richard Leitch, Robert E. Jones and Edwin K. Hom, Fisher-Friedman & Associates, Dorman/Munselle Associates, Homer Delawie, Edward Malone, and Schwager-Ballew.

In summary, during the 1960s people began to treat their homes in the same way they had been sold to them: as a mass-produced product. Rising real estate values, increased mobility, and changing tastes and needs encouraged homeowners to trade up. By one account in 1964, "the average family could afford to trade up to a house costing up to 70% more than its present home."[140] By 1966, *House & Home* described the phenomenon in progress: "We all thought of a house as a homestead. But to the new — and highly mobile — generation, a house has become as disposable as other possessions."[141] Changing demographics and lifestyles forced merchant builders to

diversify their product offerings from single-family residential housing to multi-family, commercial, and industrial projects — and they brought their architects with them. A series of minor economic recessions culminating with the oil crisis and the recession of 1973-75 brought an important chapter of Southern California development to a close.

The architects had ridden the wave with their developer clients. Idealism had been tempered with compromise in the first decade (the 1950s). While idealism flourished in the second (the 1960s) it was often thwarted by economic circumstance. By 1973, the profession had changed and the economy was in tatters. Work was harder to come by. Many firms downsized. New building and energy codes in California were making the use of large expanses of glass untenable, and the former belief in what Modern architecture could bring to the public's quality of life was now waning as minimalist-styled public housing projects became eyesores associated with the failure of the promise of Modernism. Still, the developers (specifically the merchant builders) and the architects who worked with them, created a vernacular Modernism that reached far beyond Southern California and the experiences architects like Fickett, Dorman and Krisel had in designing for merchant builders influenced their practices in ways far beyond these projects.

Chapter One Endnotes

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[1] This chapter focuses primarily on those trends, events, and forces at play for developers and the architects that worked for them in Southern California. For a broader national timeline of the period 1941 through 1949, consult the Chronology in *World War II and the American Dream* by Donald Albrecht, editor.

[2] For more detail on the impact of World War II on the sense of urgency among Americans that having now won their battlesm they were eager to start living, consult the essays to be found in *World War II and the American Dream* by Donald Albrecht, editor.

[3] "Can We Expect 'MIRACLES' In Postwar Houses?" *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1945, E3, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[4] Entenza's first Case Study House to be opened, the numerically challenged #11 by J.R. Davidson at 540 S. Barrington Ave. in West Los Angeles, was covered in *Arts & Architecture* in July and covered by the *Los Angeles Times* as open for visitation August 25, 1946 through September 1st, 1946.

[5] For extensive discussion of this project, suggested reading includes *Magnetic Los Angeles* by Greg Hise and the biography *Fritz B. Burns and the Development of Los Angeles* by James Thomas Keane.

[6] "Fritz Burns," *Kiplinger Personal Finance*, May 1947, 41.

[7] Ibid.

[8] In 1969, developer Larry Weinberg merged his Larwin Co. with CNA in attempt to create "A General Motors of Housing" according to Ned Eichler's book *Fame and Fortune*.

[9] So successful was the 1946 effort that Burns collaborated again with Welton Becket on a second exhibit home, "The House of Tomorrow," in 1951.

[10] Marissa Gluck, "Breaking! Wilshire Blvd.'s House of Tomorrow on Market Again," LACurbed, http://la.curbed.com/archives/2008/01/live_in_yesterd.php (accessed July 4, 2011).

[11] "Display Ad 4," *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1946, 7, and "Display Ad 78," *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1946, 31, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[12] The *Los Angeles Times* Kaiser Homes ad of February 20, 1949 is not the first development ad in the real estate section to mention an architect. Paul Trousdale promoted his Tahiquitz River Estates in Palm Springs by Allen G. Siple and Stephen A. Stepanian in January of 1948. In November of that year, Mayfair Park homes in Chino were advertised as by "Hugh Gibbs, famous architect." However, these ads tended to be isolated instances for smaller developments. The Kaiser Homes ad campaign with Wurdeman and Becket is one of the first large and consistent campaigns for an architect-developer collaboration in Southern California.

[13] "Display Ad 67," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb 20, 1949, E5, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[14] "Display Ad 72," *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 1948, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[15] Ned Eichler, *Fame or Fortune: Giants of the Housing Industry* (Lincoln, NE: IUniverse, 2005), 13.

[16] Fieldwork in Storybook Village located on the south side of Plummer Ave., between Hayvenhurst and Woodley Ave. on February 1, 2011.

[17] "Southland Dwellings Top Nation in Design," *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1956, D1, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[18] "Mass Housing Field Eyed by U.S. Architects," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1950, E6, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Although Levitt and Son are most commonly associated with Levittown, New York and Levittown, Pennsylvania, this merchant builder organization created several developments in the prewar and postwar eras. For more information, consult "The Levitts, Mass Produced Houses, and Community Planning" by Richard Longstreth in the book, *Second Suburb*, edited by Dianne Harris.

[21] Ned Eichler, *The Merchant Builders* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 40.

[22] "$2,000,000 in Sales Reported for New Residential Tract," *Los Angeles Times,* August 1, 1954, E13, and "Display Ad 101" *Los Angeles Times,* September 2, 1954, E6, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011); and "New 184 House San Gabriel Valley Project Previewed," *Los Angeles Times,* September 29, 1954, E8, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[23] "Economy House," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1953, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[24] "Display Ad 83," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1952, E11, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[25] "Expansion of Development Firm Slated," *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1959, F9, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[26] "Display Ad 113," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1955, E22, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[27] James Thomas Keane, *Fritz B. Burns and the Development of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, California: The Historical Society of Southern California, 2001), 63-4.

[28] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders,* 8.

[29] "Display Ad 83," *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1952, E2, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[30] For example the FHA design standards called for "minimum room sizes" which might not be accommodated in a modern open plan where one space melts seamlessly into another without defined walls.

[31] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 54.

[32] Elizabeth Jo Lampl, "Charles M. Goodman and 'Tomorrow's Vernacular," *Housing Washington,* ed. Richard Longstreth. (Chicago, Il: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2010), 239.

[33] "Southland GI Loan Total Near 100,000," *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 1949. E7, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[34] Ibid.

[35] "GI Loans Top $10 Billion in Five Years, *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1950. E4, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[36] The population of Los Angeles County was 4.15 million in 1950. http://www.laep.org/target/science/population/table.html According to the US Census, total US Population was 152 million people in 1950. http://www.npg.org/facts/us_historical_pops.htm (accessed March 14, 2011).

[37] "Ending of Curbs on GI Loans Explained By VA," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1953, E10, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[38] "Down-payments on Veterans Homes to Be Cut," *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1952, I9, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[39] "Ending of Curbs on GI Loans Explained By VA," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1953, E10, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[40] "Grand Opening is Extended at New Southeast Project," *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1954, E4, and "Display Ad 98," *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1954, E9, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[41] "GI Home Loans in '53 Increase Almost 5%,"*Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1954, F2, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[42] "GI Home Loans Reach Record," *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1954, I2, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[43] "Federal Loan Guarantee Developments Received," *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1955, E20, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[44] www.recession.org (accessed March 14, 2011).

[45] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 136.

[46] Dan MacMasters, "Customizing the Development House," *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1966, L14, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[47] As a means of adjusting elevation choices and floor plan choices for the size of the development, the author has developed the plan-to-development and exterior-to-development ratios that divide the total number of developed housing units by the number of floor plans or available exterior combinations, respectively. The lower the ratios, therefore, the more diversity present in the development. "Features of Houses Told," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1953, E10, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[48] "Luxury Houses Preview Slated," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1954, E15, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[49] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 32.

[50] Dan Mac Masters, "Customizing the Development House."

[51] By 1954, Eichler was building an average of 300 units per year. The company doubled that production volume in 1955 and maintained an average of 700 houses sold per year until 1960, according to Ned Eichler in his book *The Merchant Builders*.

[52] "Premiere Showing of New Exhibit Home Scheduled," *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1955, E10, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[53] "Space Hut in Hills Slated to Open Today," *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1959, F8, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[54] "Space Hut Builders Lauded By Soroptimists for Fund Aid," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1959, F9, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[55] "Grand Opening Slated for New Community," *Los Angeles Times,* April 24, 1955, F2, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[56] Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990) 252.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "Display Ad 99," *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1954, F3, http://proquest.com (accessed August 3, 2011).

[59] "Design Contest Co-Sponsored by House & Home and Sunset Magazines," *House & Home*, June 1956, 149.

[60] James A. Jacobs, "Social and Spatial Change in the Postwar Family Room," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 13, no 1 (2006), 70.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Display Ad 13, *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1946, A6, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[63] Esther McCoy, *Case Study Houses, 1945-62* (Los Angeles, CA: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1977) 28.

[64] Ibid., 206.

[65] A. Quincy Jones, *Builders Homes For Better Living* (New York, NY: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1957), 85.

[66] "Design Contest Co-Sponsored…" *House & Home*, June 1957, 144-150.

[67] Atria had appeared in house plans prior to this, most notably an expanded version of the atrium was planned for Ralph Rapson's unrealized Greenbelt House for the Case Study House Program.

[68] Jerry Ditto and Lanning Stern, *Design for Living: Eichler Homes* (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 1995), 86.

[69] William Krisel interview with the author June 21, 2011.

[70] "First Tract With an Atrium," *Los Angeles Times*, April 3, 1960, C64, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[71] "Design Trends in a Bustling Market," *House & Home*, July 1959, 122.

[72] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 13.

[73] "Hearing Set on McNally Ranch Zone," *Los Angeles Times*, December 14, 1952, A21, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

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[84] Burden, "Homes in a Hurry."

[85] For more on the Coming of age for plywood as a material for construction and design, see the article entitled "Scarcity and Promise" by Robert Friedel in *World War II and the American Dream* edited by Donald Albrecht.

[86] Ibid.

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[94] "Architect and Merchant Builder, " *Bulletin of the American Institute of Architects* (March-April 1955): 57.

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[105] A 1963 ad for the "Hilltop Monterey" development suggested there was "No more R-1 land available" ("Display Ad 218," *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 1963, N37). Likewise a 1959 ad for the "Grandview Palos Verdes" development featured a lone gas

mask and the headline "Live smog free." ("Display Ad 51," *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1959, E1).

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[110] Walled-lot subdivisions are distinctive from earlier subdivisions in which it was common for homeowners to construct fences between adjacent properties. In these later subdivisions, the architect drew the plans for the walls (on three sides of the property) from the inception of the home plans and positioned the houses with one side on or near the lot line. In this way, the nominal area normally allotted for setback was combined, most often into usable, landscaped patios with the walls providing privacy.

[111] "What Do the Four Blank Spaces Have in Common?" *House & Home*, August 1968, 78.

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Peter Booth Wiley, *National Trust Guide San Francisco: America's Guide for Architecture and History Travelers* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000), 294.

[115] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 140.

[116] Dan Mac Masters, "Condominiums— The Most Exciting Housing Development in 15 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1964, 44, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

[117] Ibid.

[118] U.S. Census Bureau Statistics for New Residential Construction, "Historic Annual Building Permit Data by State," http://www.census.gov/const/www/newresconstindex_excel.html (accessed February 12, 2011).

[119] *Fame or Fortune: Giants of the Houseing Industry* (Lincoln, NE:IUniverse, 2005), 17.

[120] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 157-159.

[121] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 136.

[122] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 149.

[123] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 158.

[124] Eichler, *The Merchant Builders*, 134.

[125] "Housing's 1967 Market: the Biggest Pent Up Demand," *House & Home*, November 1966, 88.

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[131] Ibid.

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[134] "1964 Award Winners," *House & Home*, July 1964, 67.

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[136] "Display Ad 42," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1965, D4 http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

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[138] Ray Hebert, "Master Plan Set for Irvine Ranch," *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 1960, 2, http://proquest.com (accessed March 14, 2011).

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CHAPTER TWO:
EDWARD H. FICKETT: THE TRUE MODIFIED MODERN AESTHETIC

Edward Hale Fickett (1916-1999) was one of the most prolific architects of his generation. Combining his experience in construction with his training in architectural design, Fickett was well positioned to work with postwar developers on the creation of thousands of tract homes across Southern California.

The number of homes Fickett was involved with has risen to the level of urban myth. Some sources report that number to be as many as 100,000. By Fickett's own accounting, prior to 1963 he was responsible for "…the planning and design of seventy residential communities containing in excess of 40,000 single family dwellings."[1] A partial list of subdivisions compiled by the author from *Los Angeles Times* articles and advertisements citing Fickett as the architect for a tract totals more than 10,000 homes. Because developers often replicated the designs in multiple tracts and because the architects who worked with developers rarely participated in construction supervision of these developments, a comprehensive figure is difficult to attain.

The inconclusive nature of the arithmetic, however, belies an important aspect of understanding postwar architecture in Southern California: tract houses are at their very core, a product. Fickett understood this concept. When writing about the 1960 Home Design Clinic jointly sponsored by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), Fickett identified the "necessity for a designed product that would sell and return a reasonable profit to the investor, developer, and contractor."[2] Fickett's recognition of this fact significantly contributed to his leadership role in creating a new business model for architects. It also contributed to his success in mediating between diverse constituencies such as builders, policy makers

and designers to improve the quality of merchant-built tract housing in the United States.

As the following chapter will demonstrate, Fickett's tract houses were not dumbed-down versions of custom home designs. In fact, they were the exact opposite. Fickett's tract homes provided an architectural language that would trickle upwards into his custom homes and commercial work. This is evident in both his early and late tract designs, Sherman Park (1952) and Grossmont Hills (1960), respectively, and in his speculative house, custom-house and clubhouse projects at La Costa Resort and Spa (1965). All of these projects will be discussed in detail in the pages that follow.

A key element of that architectural language was the spatial experience he created on the interiors of his homes. As one of the first architects to sell a large-scale merchant builder on the efficiency of post-and-beam construction (along with his willingness to decouple the construction method from the post-and-beam aesthetic), he enhanced the living spaces of thousands of Southern Californians. Because Fickett elected to advocate for pragmatism over dogma, his early work with developers subjugated his potential as a designer but provided him with a platform for local, regional and national diplomacy within an industry destined to shape America's built environment. The nature of Fickett's practice resulted in the creation of what author David Smiley refers to as a "modified modern"[3] aesthetic that followed him throughout his career. When liberated from mass production, limited budgets, lender restrictions, and able to design for individual clients instead of target audiences, Fickett created quality custom homes informed by the best practices from his early tract-house experience.

To this end, this chapter will document his early years including the importance of his Naval experience and of role models in shaping his own career trajectory. This is followed by an overview of Fickett's early innovations in tract housing and the development business. Lastly, the chapter will analyze several key projects designed by Fickett between 1960-1973.

Early Years

Upon his birth in Los Angeles on May 19, 1916, Fickett's DNA destined him to become involved with housing development in Southern California. His grandfather's brother, Charles, was a partner in the subdivision of the Matthews and Fickett tract[4] in Boyle Heights in 1876.[5] His grandfather, also named Edward Fickett, was in Los Angeles as early as the 1880s employed as a carpenter and "builder of homes."[6] By 1910, George E. Fickett, the architect's father, was enumerated in the census alongside his father as a "carpenter builder."[7] During the Depression, George worked as a contractor for the Security Finance and Building Company, a successful developer of large apartment buildings and income properties all over Los Angeles. From the time he was a young boy, the future architect was surrounded by building, volume-oriented construction projects and real estate. During summers Fickett worked construction for his father or worked for his father's friend, architect Sumner Spaulding. Spaulding encouraged Fickett to take architecture classes from USC, where he was teaching at the time.[8]

After graduating from Beverly Hills High School in 1934, Fickett started attending night classes offered by the University of Southern California's "University College."[9] Started in 1932, USC's "night school" for architecture was designed to appeal

"…to the practical needs of students already engaged in the professional fields in addition to a thoroughly scholarly approach to the modern program."[10] As Professor Clayton M. Baldwin described, the curriculum of University College was highly practical. Classes prepared "…the student to take the Architect's State Board Examination in design and history."[11] Night classes were offered twice per week in architectural design, as well as classes in architectural engineering, rendering and composition, landscape design, sculpture, ceramics, interior decoration, and "estimating and construction economics."[12] University College instructors included Clayton M. Baldwin (architecture and architectural history), Paul Starrett Sample (painting), Merrel Gage (sculpture), Glen Lukens (ceramics), and Daniel Lutz (water colors). Each class was twelve weeks long, and Fickett attended these night courses between 1934 and 1937.[13] Design studio classes were conducted in the old architecture building on campus, however, the other University College classes were held at a downtown location convenient for working professionals. As previously documented by Deborah Howell-Ardila, the establishment of the night school was part of Dean Arthur C. Weatherhead's overall transformation of the architectural pedagogy at USC away from the beaux-arts to a more modern curriculum.[14] For example, in 1937 while Fickett was attending night classes, the USC School of Architecture established a new course on the study of the housing tract. Under Baldwin's direction, students were assigned to study the layout and "realty utilization," and create a model of the newly developed neighborhood of Leimert Park.[15]

Beginning in 1937, Fickett also started taking classes at Art Center School at its Seventh Street location in downtown Los Angeles. Founded in 1931 during the heart of

the Depression, Art Center's mission was to "teach real-world skills to artists and designers and prepare them for leadership roles in advertising, publishing and industrial design."[16] Courses were taught by working professionals, rather than academicians, and the curriculum from the 1930s offered classes in advertising, industrial design, painting, drawing and photography. In a 1935 ad for the school, Art Center is identified as a place for "serious practical study."[17] Fickett continued with classes at Art Center through 1940.

Although Fickett never earned a degree from USC or Art Center, this emphasis on practical education, housing tracts and becoming a licensed architect, provided a strong foundation for his career and allowed him to work while attending classes.[18] Between 1935-1938, Fickett worked part-time as a draftsman in the office of architect Sumner Spaulding and his employment expanded to full-time between 1938 and 1940.[19]

In retrospect, Sumner Spaulding was an interesting early employer and role model for Fickett. Spaulding was President of the Southern California Chapter of the AIA during this time and active on many civic and design committees, including one to develop a master plan for the Los Angeles Civic Center. Spaulding also sat on a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) jury to judge model home projects. Spaulding's civic engagement and professional leadership would become a model for Fickett in his own career.

According to architectural historian Elizabeth A.T. Smith, "Spaulding's practice…made a clean transformation in the year 1936 from fine classical architecture to modern design."[20] His H.N. Millea Residence (1939) in Santa Monica embraced the flat roof and curvilinear elements associated with the Streamline Moderne style, but he

executed them in regional California redwood. That same year, Spaulding's "House in the Sun," was a display house sponsored by the Security First National Trust Savings Bank, The American Brass Co., the Douglas Fir Plywood Association, the California Redwood Association, and the Southern California Gas Company (see Figure 2:1 and 2:2). Advertisements encouraged people to "See How to Live the California Way"[21] and the house design made much of its multi-purpose rooms for a "region where sports and recreation are so much a part of everyday living."[22] The House in the Sun was published in early 1940 in *California Arts & Architecture* which lauded its design as being for those that "want to enjoy California life to the fullest" with "vast expanses of windows opening onto the patio bringing the outdoors into the living room and dining alcove."[23]

Yet the house was neither Streamline Moderne nor International Style in style. In plan, it featured a large motor court, strongly associating the California lifestyle with the automobile, and a large combined living room and dining room area that could be divided by a curtain as needed. The family living spaces were oriented to the rear of the property and adjacent patio, which could be accessed via a single door.

"House in the Sun" is not only interesting for its early connection to the California lifestyle in the pre-Entenza owned years of *Arts and Architecture* magazine, but for its potential influence on the young Edward Fickett who as a draftsman in Spaulding's office would have certainly been involved with the plans and viewed the house under construction. Despite Spaulding's interest in Modernism at this point, this "California-style" home of redwood siding and hipped roofline has more in common with the postwar Ranch style or the work of the Bay Area architects such as William Wurster than prewar Modernism in Southern California. Sumner Spaulding and John

Rex, however, would later be tapped by John Entenza in 1945-1947 to design Case Study House #2, a simple and straightforward house of less avant-garde design than other Case Study Houses.

In June of 1940, Fickett left Spaulding's office for a six-month stint as a draftsman in the office of structural engineer Kirby Ferguson. In early 1941, Fickett moved up to the position of designer in the office of Stephan A. Stepanian where he worked until joining the Navy in 1942.

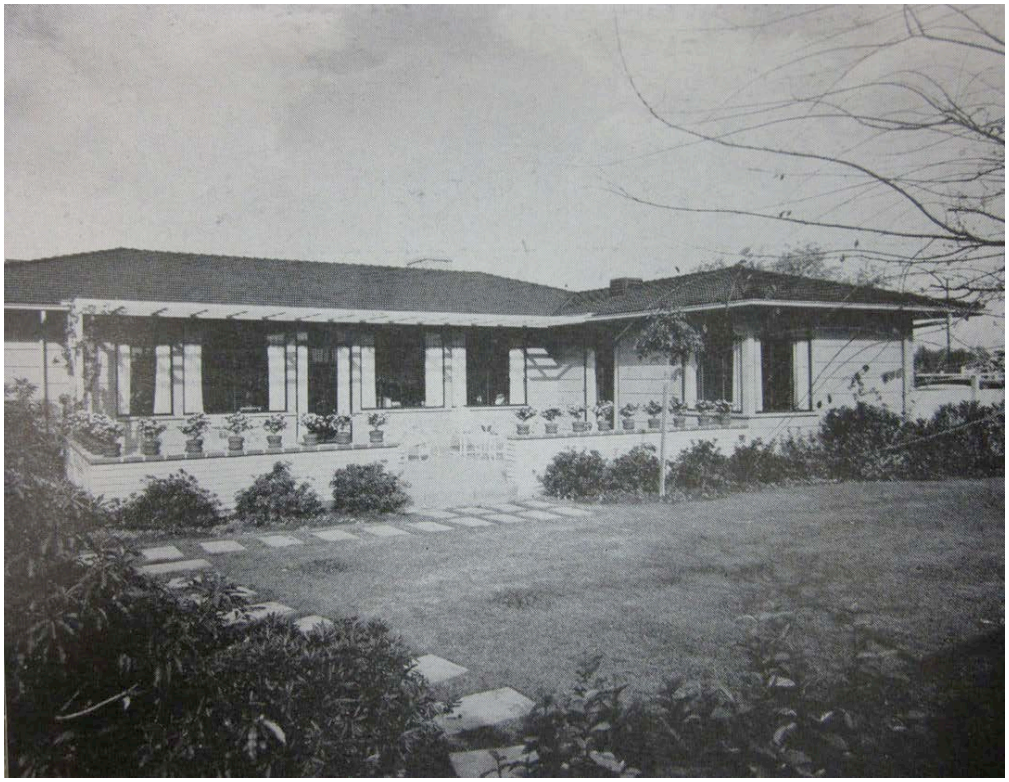


Figure 2:1 Rear elevation of the "House in the Sun" (1939) in Hollywood, California by Sumner Spaulding. The house was designed especially to "fit into the California scheme of things." "House in the Sun," *California Arts & Architecture*, February 1940, 22. Photo by Miles Berne. Permission pending.

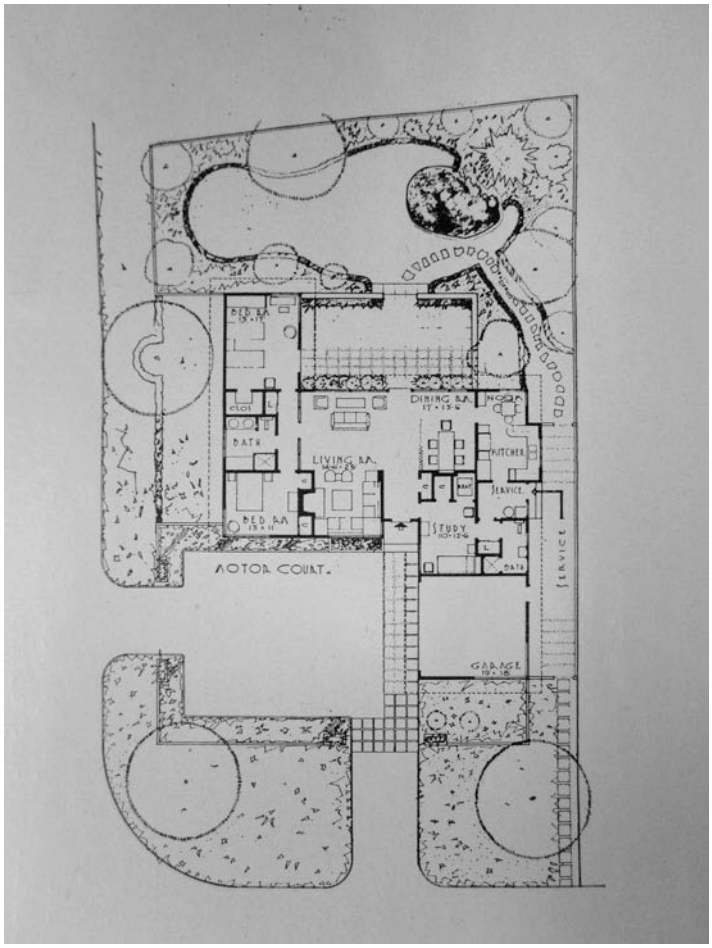


Figure 2:2 Plan for "House in the Sun" (1939) in Hollywood, California by Sumner Spaulding, featuring a rear-facing living-dining room combination open to the patio with glass and a single door. "House in the Sun," *California Arts & Architecture*, February 1940, 23. Permission pending.

Like so many men of his generation, Fickett's education and training was interrupted by World War II. After attending the Navy's Officers Training School in 1942, Fickett became an Ensign in the U.S. Coast Guard/U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps. He participated in the construction of the U.S. Coast Guard Depot in Wilmington, California then was assigned a more daunting task: construction of chains of navigation stations off the coast of Alaska and in the Central Pacific known as Long Range Aids to Navigation (LORAN).[24]

Lieutenant Fickett served in the Construction Detatchment A (Unit 26) that constructed LORAN chains in the Bering Sea, Western Aleutians, and Marshall Islands. Officers were either "civil engineers" or "experienced construction men" who worked with enlisted personnel "selected for their experience and skill in essential trades."[25] In 1943, Unit 26 built the first full chain of stations at five locations. The construction crew experienced significant challenges in terms of inclement weather, siting on inaccessible rocky outcroppings, transportation of over 1,400 tons of materials, and the lack of appropriate construction tools and earth-moving equipment. In the summer of 1943, Unit 26 began construction of the Western Aleutians Loran Chain using what they had learned from the first chain to improve construction methods and materials. Speed and efficiency of construction was imperative to this mission. As such, an independent construction unit (as opposed to construction and operations personnel being combined) was established. 130 men and eight officers were divided into four detatchments of thirty men, each under the command of a construction officer like Fickett.[26] In 1944, in the Marshall Islands, Unit 26 constructed four more LORAN stations— this time incorporating new hut designs for tropical conditions and increased ventilation (see Figure 2:3). According to the official LORAN history of the Coast Guard, "…the Marshall chain were about the best built, and that these stations were the most uniform of all the stations."[27]

Wartime exposure to technology and all its efficiencies was often combined with the need for "scrounging" to make the most of limited supplies and manpower. Such transformation required an ability to see objects and materials unconstrained by existing paradigms. Once back at home, these same men became a generation of tinkerers and

led the Do-It-Yourself movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. Power tools developed during the war quickly found a market among postwar Do-It-Yourselfers. This connection was verified by a consumer survey by a leading power tool manufacturer who "…discovered that millions of men and women had learned to use power tools in the armed forces and war plants and wanted some of their own."[28] Scrounging and creative construction problem-solving were hallmarks of the LORAN program and skills that would undoubtedly serve Fickett well in his future work with merchant builders.

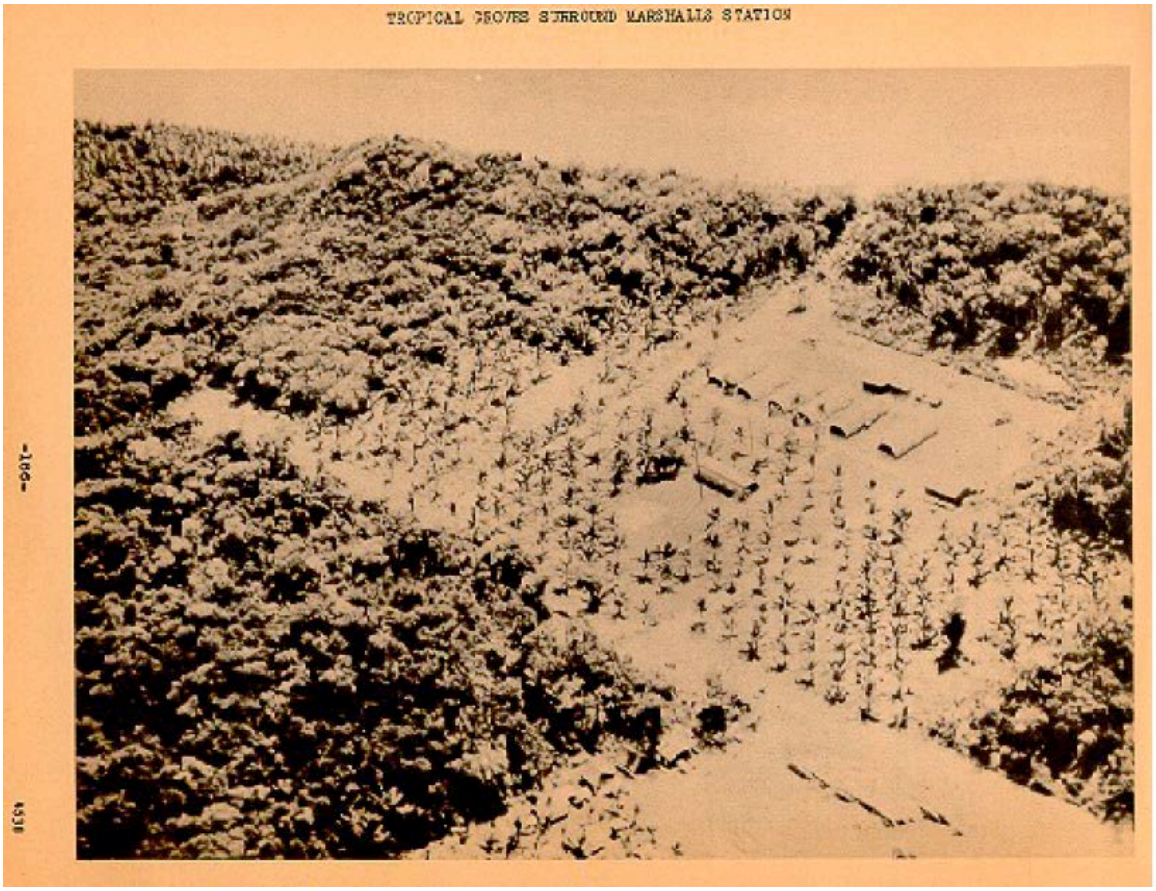


Figure 2:3 Marshalls Islands LORAN station constructed by Edward H. Fickett's Unit 26, Construction Detachment A. Historical Section Public Information Division U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, August 1, 1946, "The Coast Guard at War IV, LORAN, Volume II" http://www.uscg.mil/history/STATIONS/loran_volume_2.pdf

Like many returning servicemen, Fickett wasted no time in starting a family and in May of 1944 while still stationed in Long Beach, he married Lucille M. Moore and moved to Beverly Hills. He partnered professionally with Francis J. Heusel beginning in 1944. Fickett was first published by the *Los Angeles Times* for a house designed in tandem with Heusel for a returning Marine in 1946, and he became a licensed architect in 1947. He entered private practice as "Edward Fickett, Architect" in September of 1949 and within three months became a member of the AIA.

The stage was now set. Fickett's wartime construction experience, family business and pragmatic education positioned him well for his new career: working with housing developers.

Working for Developers: Decoupling and Incremental Aesthetic Innovation

> Coming from a family of contractors has taught me to respect the builder, subcontractor and other members of the building team. I can remember at an early age the respect that my father elicited from all the building trades responsible for work on the projects he was constructing. The jobs were always better because of this relationship.[29]
>
> Edward H. Fickett, 1953

Based on his background, training, and the huge demand for postwar housing, it would seem a logical and calculated business strategy for the young architect to work with merchant builders. It was, however, quite the opposite. According to *House and Home* magazine, in 1949 "a savings and loan president for whom Fickett had designed a commercial structure put him in touch with a builder whose house sales were beginning to slow down unaccountably." Before long, Fickett was working with Coronet Construction Company, Seacrest Construction Company, Hobart Williams, Mac-Bright Builders, Ponty-Built Homes, and Volk-McLain Company. By his own account, many of these projects required Fickett to "compromise" and create "hybrids" in order to

transition the developers toward better plans and designs.[30] As a result, Fickett's early designs for such developments as Palm Grove (1950), Boulevard Grove (1950), Lake Marie Ranchos (1951), Coronet Homes (1951), La Habra Park (1951) and Suncrest Park (1952) in communities such as Whittier, Downey, La Habra, Covina, and Norwalk appear more closely linked with the problem of faceless or overtly charming postwar tract homes than they do with any solution to the problem. The sheer numbers of them (over 2,700 were constructed in just the tracts mentioned above over a period of two years) contribute to a murky architectural design legacy for Fickett. During the remaining years of the decade, Fickett went on to establish multi-year working relationships with some of the largest and most prolific developers in Southern California including Volk-McLain, McDonald Bros., and Julian Weinstock and Associates. In all these cases, Fickett was content to incrementally educate developers on the merits of modern design in mass production housing.

One of Fickett's most important contributions to the early days of tract housing for developers was his ability to persuade developers of large-scale tracts to move toward cheaper post-and-beam construction—thereby enabling the architect to integrate elements of the free plan and floor-to-ceiling glass. Prior to Fickett, A. Quincy Jones employed post-and-beam construction for the twenty-eight plans for Mutual Housing Association, 1946-1950. As a cooperative vs. a tract development, the building of the Mutual homes was neither standardized nor large in scale. Only 160 homes were built to those plans. In 1951, Jones began designing for Joseph Eichler, who committed to an avant-garde Mid-Century Modern aesthetic, but created developments that averaged only between 50-200 homes.[31] The majority of merchant builders, however, were not

sold on an avant-garde design aesthetic. Therefore, Edward Fickett decoupled post-and-beam construction from a Mid-Century Modern aesthetic that expressed and celebrated the structure and minimal ornament. With his contractor's eye, Fickett was quick to spot the cost savings that could be realized with this form of construction. In his award-winning designs for developer Elwain Steinkamp, for example, Fickett estimated that the post-and-beam construction technique saved between $100 and $125 per house—helping to realize quality houses for as little as $10.50 per square foot.[32] The result was a free plan, light and space that made Fickett-designed homes unique on the inside without being perceived as overly avant-garde on the outside.[33] It was a pragmatic solution to a pressing problem.

Fickett's strategy of decoupling and incremental aesthetic innovation is best exemplified by his early and important relationship with developer, Ray Hommes. Hommes started his development business in 1923, built apartments and commercial structures in the 1930s, and secured government and military contracts during World War II. After the war, he turned to large-scale tract housing. In 1949, his 387-unit Norwalk Gardens development saw sales rates slipping. The "Buttons and Bows Provincial Maple Cottage" and "Laces and Graces" model names convey Hommes' stylistic preference for contemporary versions of historical motifs featuring board and batten, shutters and latticework (see Figure 2:4).[34]

Enter Fickett, who Hommes elected to partner with in late 1951 or early 1952 on his next development: the 1,000-unit Sherman Park (1952) in Reseda. *House and Home*[35] called Sherman Park "…the first large-scale tract of all-out contemporary design in the Los Angeles area." While Sherman Park eschewed period styles, it can be asserted that

the architecture (especially on the street elevation) was not as pure a Mid-Century Modern aesthetic as comparable Eichler Homes. In fact, the design elevations share more in common with the Sumner Spaulding's "House in the Sun," than the Eichler series. Described as "authentic modern California ranch," designs featured long low profiles, board and batten siding, box-frame window detailing, and wooden screens to integrate carport areas into the design of the house (see Figure 2:5).[36] Based on the success of Sherman Park, Fickett and Hommes immediately partnered again on Meadowlark Park (1952) in Northridge, where Fickett pushed Hommes to take a more avant-garde design aesthetic, incorporating double-plane rooflines (see Figure 2:6). Meadowlark Park also featured more Mid-Century Modern details including a post-and-beam shade structure at the rear patio (see Figure 2:7).

Figure 2:4 Hommes' 1949 Norwalk Gardens development prior to partnering with Edward H. Fickett on more modern designs. "Photo Standalone No 6" *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1949, E2. Copyright © 1949 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

Figure 2:5 Hommes' 1952 Sherman Park development by Edward H. Fickett decoupled post-and-beam construction from an avant-garde modern aesthetic to produce these contemporary ranch style homes. "California Ranch Houses Featured at Valley Tract," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1952, 28. Copyright © 1952 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

Figure 2:6 In Hommes' 1952-4 Meadowlark Park, Fickett pushed the modern aesthetic to new heights with the double-plane roof design. "Crowds Greet Opening of New Development" *Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 1952, 37. Copyright © 1952 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

Figure 2:7 Meadowlark Park featured more modern design details including a more "modern" shade structure at rear patio. Maynard L. Parker, photographer. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Over 38,000 people visited the two- and three-bedroom Sherman Park homes (ranging in price from $10,200-$11,400) during the first weeks after opening.[37] The public described the houses as unusually open-feeling and airy. Within two weeks of their debut, the first phase of 251 units was sold out and the construction schedule for the second unit of 315 homes was accelerated; "The builders work on a schedule of seven complete houses per day; on the second unit they hope to accelerate it to ten a day."[38]

The response within the industry was as enthusiastic as the public. At the time, Paul Burkhardt, the treasurer of the NAHB said:

> As a result of the interest aroused in the Fickett houses, I went out to look at the tract; I had to park two blocks away. Sherman Park is something for Fickett and Hommes to be proud of; they have mighty good ideas, including the way they avoided monotony in the entire tract. I'd like to try something like Sherman Park one of these days.[39]

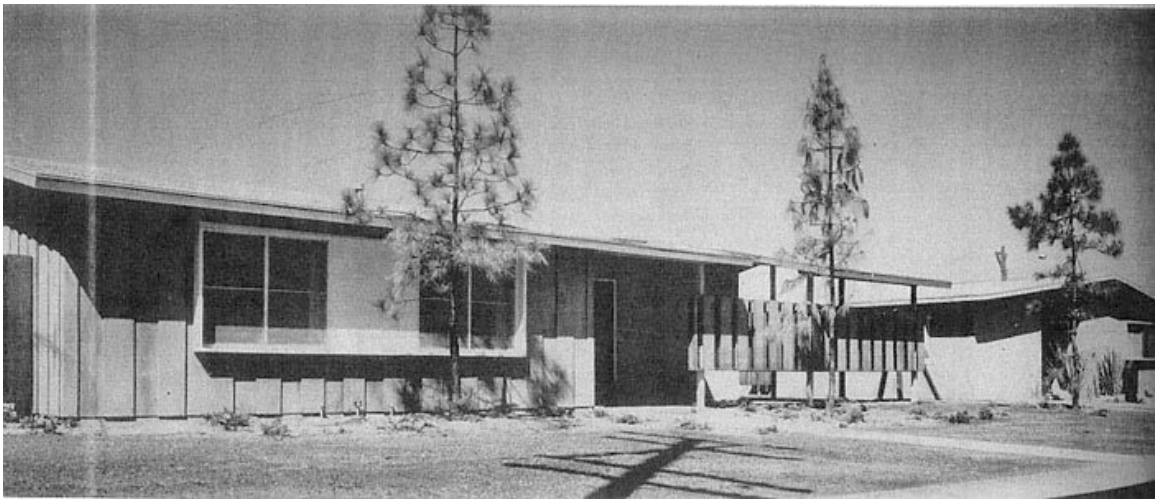


Figure 2:8 View from street shows two elevations, one-side gabled roof and one front-gabled roof to avoid monotony. Photo by Julius Shulman. "The Fickett Formula: Good Design Works Both Ways." *House and Home*, March 1953, 132. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

David Silpher of the Fritz Burns organization commented, "The Fickett-Hommes success in Sherman Park gives us heart to speed up our own contemporary styling. What they are doing is confirmation that, if you go contemporary, go all the way! It is a forward step and deserves to be looked into by builders…"[40]

Even *Arts and Architecture* magazine had praise for Sherman Park, as:

> ….good and successful examples of the commercial dwelling designed for speculation. In these examples, the necessary compromises have been handled with judgment and taste with the result that the general public has been offered a better than reasonably good choice in price range within the modern pocket book. These houses are susceptible to quantity production within generally accepted building techniques and pose no other problem than finding the speculative builder with enough good judgment and good will to undertake them.[41]

As a result, Sherman Park was widely published in shelter magazines and received numerous awards, including an Award of Merit from the National Association of Home Builders in 1953. Ray Hommes was quick to capitalize on the good publicity, with headlines such as "You've seen them in the magazines…," "These 'Magazine Story' Homes" (see Figure 2:9) and "An authentic California inspired design…"[42]

Figure 2:9 Hommes recognized the allure of the publicity Sherman Park had received in ads like this one. "Display Ad 103, " *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1952, F4. Permission pending.

As can be seen from a closer examination of the plan and foundation plan for Model A, Fickett used post-and-beam construction to open the plan for the kitchen, dining and living spaces and integrate partial-height wall partitions and floor to ceiling glass walls at the corner of the living and dining room to make the under 1,200 square-foot homes feel spacious (see Figures 2:10, 2:11, 2:12 and 2:13).

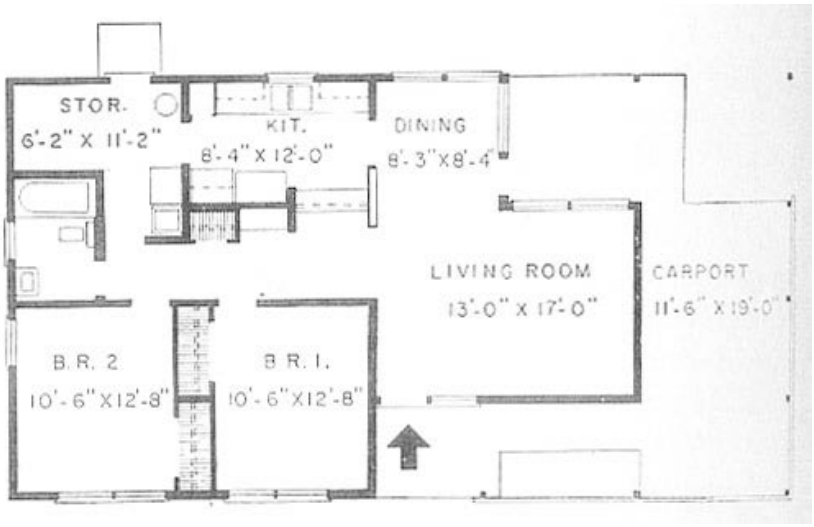


Figure 2:10 Plan for "Plan A" at Sherman Park in Reseda. Note open kitchen, dining and living room area. "The Fickett Formula," *House and Home*, March 1953, 134. Permission pending.

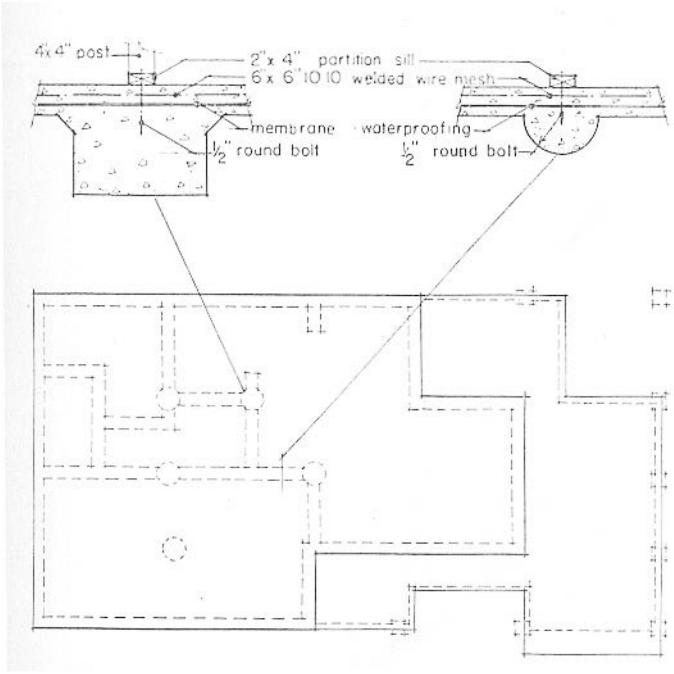


Figure 2:11 Foundation plan for "Plan A" at Sherman Park in Reseda. Note post supports for beams that free up open plan for kitchen, dining and living room area. "The Fickett Formula," *House and Home*, March 1953, 134. Permission pending.

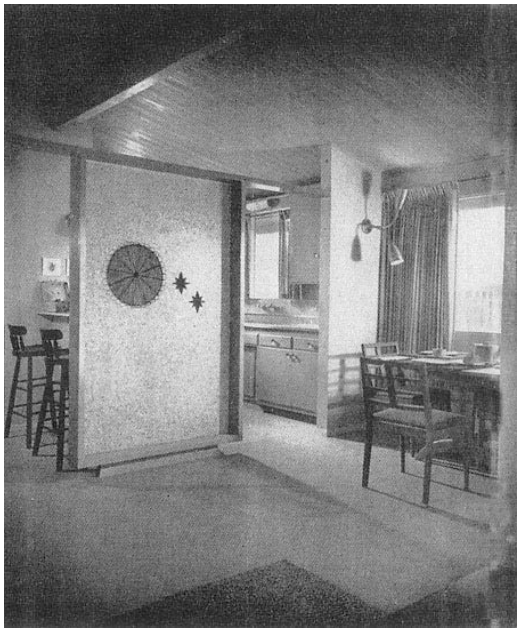


Figure 2:12 Interior view of "Plan A" at Sherman Park in Reseda with chipboard partition at partial height to ceiling. "The Fickett Formula," *House and Home*, March 1953, 134. Photo by Julius Shulman. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

Figure 2:13 Elevation for "Plan A" at Sherman Park in Reseda. Articulated screen gives elevation length and hides carport. Style is clean, contemporary ranch. "The Fickett Formula," *House and Home*, March 1953, 134. Photo by Julius Shulman. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

What truly made these Hommes homes a success was Fickett's ability to understand and resolve the pragmatic problems of building and financing them. In addition to using post-and-beam construction to cut "$50 per house" from construction costs,[43] Fickett substituted slab floors for more expensive wood floors on joists, ripped the underside of the 2x6" tongue-and-groove roof decking to "conceal the defects in the cheaper, lower-grade lumber" (see Figure 2:14) used less window trim (saving $25 per house), and incorporated new materials known as drywall and chipboard to save money.[44] Fickett also proactively sought out less expensive materials such as decorative wall-boards from Mexico and Japan and translucent screen panels. He worked with manufacturers, such as those that made asphalt tile finish floors, to create special-clear colored gray-green tile at lower-grade tile prices. These activities accomplished the dual purpose of improving aesthetics and cutting costs.

Figure 2:14 Fickett's later designs for Ray Hommes at Meadowlark Park (1952-4) utilized the same features including floor-to-ceiling glass, open plan to kitchen, and the sawn roofing material. The same fireplace design reappears later at Grossmont Hills. Maynard L. Parker, photographer. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Fickett's unwavering commitment to efficiency in his work is evidenced in plan. Virtually all of the Fickett-designed tract homes featured the most construction-efficient plan possible: the rectangle. He also often turned to a core plan — combining kitchen, bathrooms, utility room and storage whenever possible. As Fickett himself explained, "The core plan permits construction economies because of compact elements of

plumbing, heating and electrical facilities."[45] A preference for the square or rectangular plan can be seen in Fickett's later custom work as well as evidenced by his *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine* Demonstration House (1957), the custom-designed Raymond Kay Residence (1960), George Jacobsen Residence (1966), and Fickett Residence #2 (1964).

Rectangular plans such as those featured in the Volk-McLain Award Homes (1952) oriented the narrow side of the rectangle to the street with its public spaces (living room, family room, and kitchen) to the rear of the lot (see Figure 2:15). For builders McDonald Brothers, Fickett designed an even more compact version of this plan (1953) for prefabrication in a shop and trucking to site for assembly. The design won a 1956 *House and Home* Award of Merit. The plan for a three-bedroom home of 1,150 square feet and no deeper than 26'6" employed large expanses of wooden framed glass windows on the rear elevation reaching from ground level to the peak of the gable roof (see Figure 2:16).[46] This feature, in various forms and materials, would become a signature of Fickett's tract homes, speculative home designs and his custom residential work (see Figure 2:17). Fickett even adapted this feature in his institutional projects for residential neighborhoods, such as the design for Fire Station #99 (circa 1960).

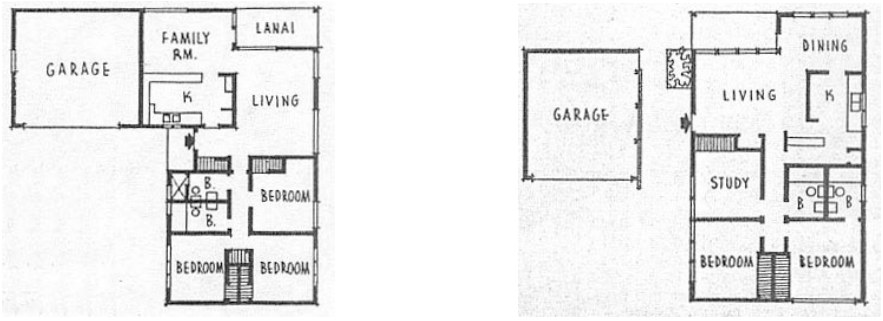


Figure 2:15 At left, plan for Volk-McClain (1952) and at right a plan for a pre-fabricated small house for McDonald Brothers (1953). "13 Award Winning Western Homes," *Sunset*, June 1956, 96. Permission pending.

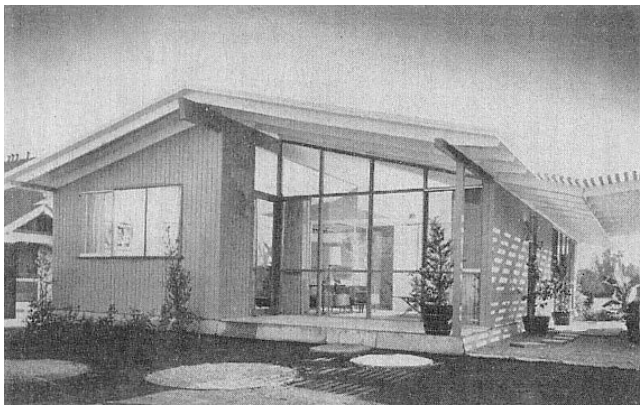


Figure 2:16 Rear elevation of McDonald Brothers design with wall of windows at rear. Channel-grooved wooden frames reduce time and materials associated with additional trim pieces for glass. "House Designed to Be Trucked to Site," *House and Home,* June 1956, 148. Photo by George de Gennaro. Permission pending.

Figure 2:17 Rear elevation of tract houses designed for Elwain Steinkamp (1954) "Quality Houses At $10.50 A Square Foot Win NAHB Award," *House and Home,* March 1955, 160. Photo by George de Gennaro. Permission pending.

Unlike some architects whose post-and-beam houses were flat-roofed, Fickett's developers relied on FHA financing availability. FHA loan restrictions prohibited a flat roof. So he opted for a more traditional gable roofline on his early tract houses. Fickett's preferred tract roofline, however, was a 1-in-12 or 2-in-12 pitch that gave the houses a dramatic presence from the street and, when exposed on the interior, increased average room height by a couple of feet. Fickett quickly learned that this additional height could

give small rooms a sense of drama as well as provide opportunities for natural light to penetrate through floor-to-ceiling or clerestory windows. An example of this practice in a small tract house bedroom, the practice is used again in the George Jacobsen Residence (1965) (see Figure 2:18).

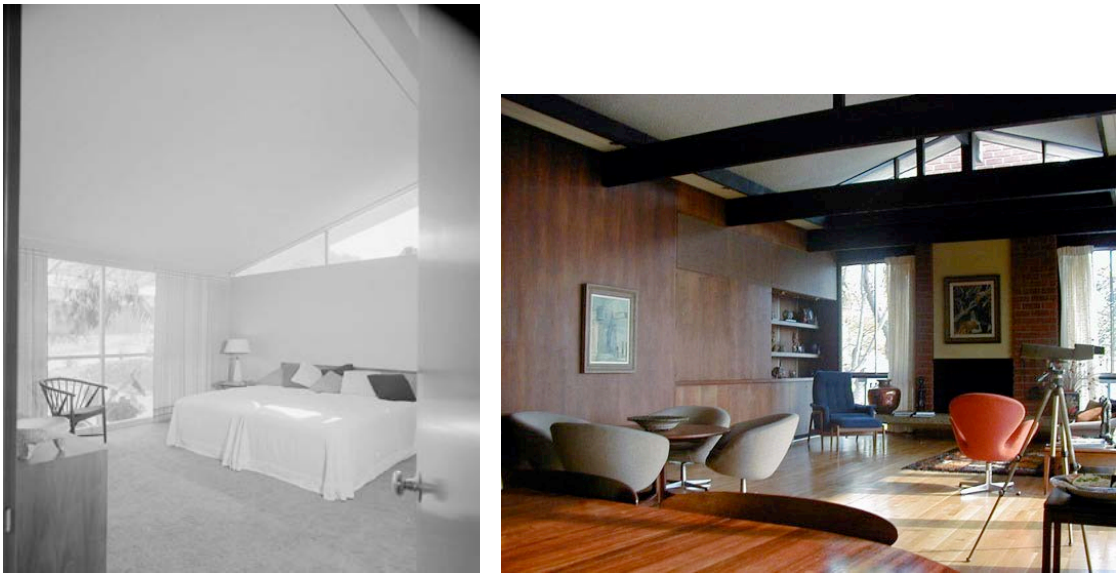


Figure 2:18 Image at left shows floor-to-ceiling glass for small tract house bedroom for Elwain Steinkamp from 1955. Image at right again shows glass used at gable height in the living room of the custom-designed Jacobsen Residence (1965). Image at left Maynard L. Parker, photographer. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Right image by John Berley.

Fickett's design aesthetic for his early tract houses was heavily influenced by his developer clients who shied away from avant-garde modern architecture. As a result, over the course of his career, Fickett designs used self-described "rustic" or "romantic" materials for texture and to achieve a "relaxed effect."[47] Fickett freely used board and batten, shake roofs, and masonry in his tract housing. Stylistically, such developments as the West Los Angeles houses for Elwain Steinkamp (1952) and the tract in Rancho Palos Verdes for Walter R. Sant and Sons (1956) are Contemporary Ranch homes (see Figures 2:20 and 2:21). Fickett's preference for these kinds of materials becomes evident when he

was not constrained by developer tastes. Fickett used adobe-like slumpstone walls, concrete paving tiles and textured stucco on his *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine* Demonstration House (1957). Brick and quarry tile are again used in residences such as the Janss Residence (circa 1965) in Palm Springs, glazed tile and unfired brick in the Adelson Residence (1967) in Carlsbad and the George Jacobsen Residence (1965).

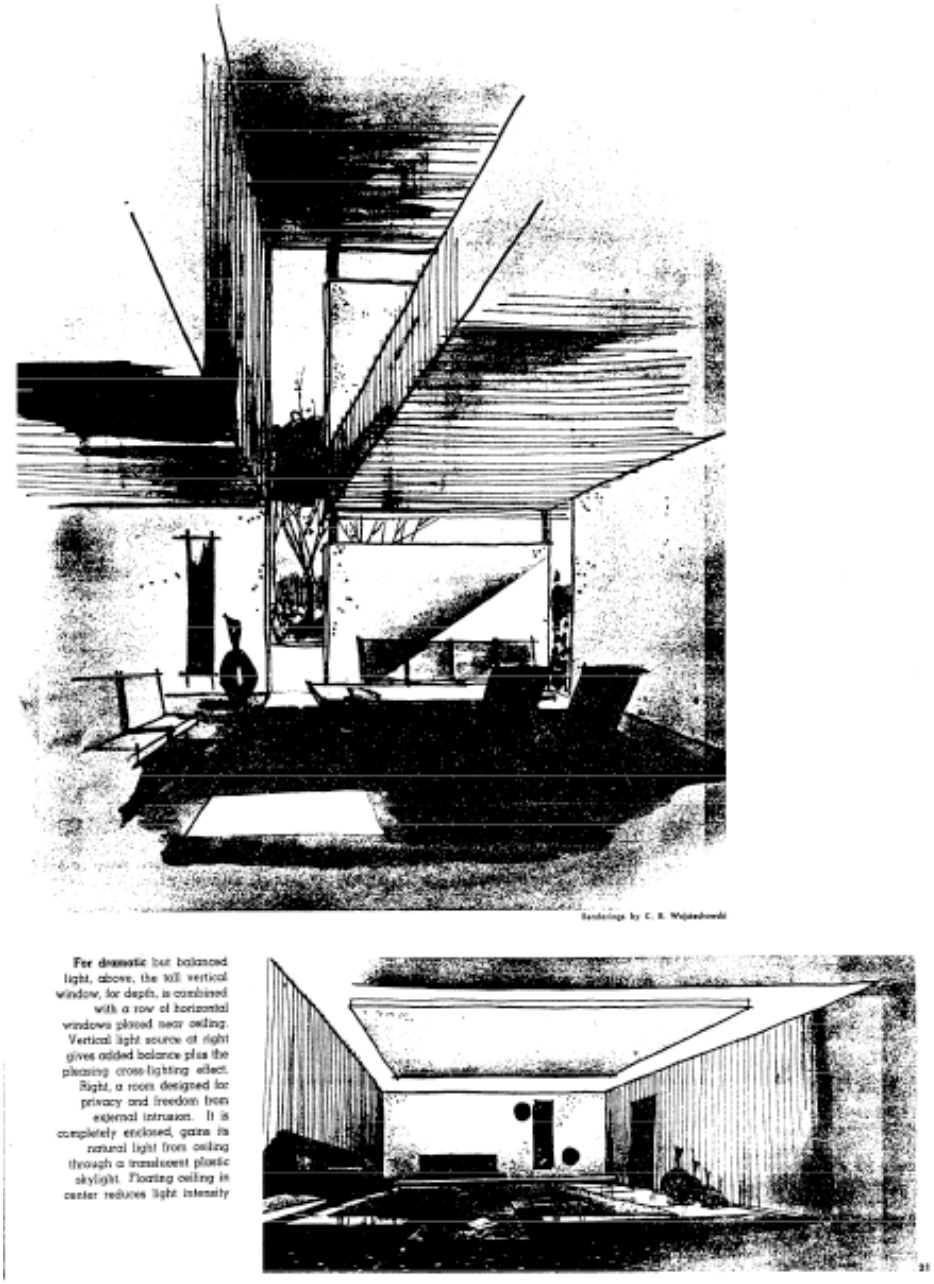
Figure 2:19 Board and batten walls, roof shakes, and masonry planter are examples of rustic materials used by Fickett in this design for Walter R. Sant and Sons in Palos Verdes. "Modern Design Can Create A Nostalgic Setting," *House and Home,* October 1955, 172. George de Gennaro. Permission pending.

Figure 2:20 Contemporary Ranch style design by Fickett for Elwain Steinkamp tract homes in West Los Angeles featured rustic materials. "Quality Houses At $10.50 A Square Foot Win NAHB Award," *House and Home,* March 1955, 160. Photo by George de Gennaro. Permission pending.

In 1957, Fickett expressed some disdain for a Modernism that worshiped the glass pavilion:

> Not many years ago there was spread around a fable that the more glass a house had the more 'modern' it was. This fairytale reached its zenith when the window wall was extended all around the house. At last, some thought, we had truly built a house of glass. Fortunately, we are not all window washers. One of the most encouraging facts about present-day Southern California architecture is the greater attention being paid to methods of controlling natural light, with or without glass.[48]

In his *Los Angeles Times* article, "Effective Control for Daylight," Fickett illustrated how to effectively harness and control natural light with solar shafts and skylights (see Figure 2:21). Fickett's interest in controlling and manipulating natural light relates to the aforementioned palette of romantic or rustic materials. The net result of the interplay of rustic materials and controlled light is texture. Fickett's interest in light and texture can be traced back to his tract home design. In his West Los Angeles development for Elwain Steinkamp, Fickett used skylights and partial-height slump block walls to give texture to modern spatial expression (see Figure 2:22). These subtle details made Fickett designs appealing to merchant builders and to the public.



Renderings by C. R. Wojiechowski

For dramatic but balanced light, above, the tall vertical window, for depth, is combined with a row of horizontal windows placed near ceiling. Vertical light source at right gives added balance plus the pleasing cross-lighting effect. Right, a room designed for privacy and freedom from external intrusion. It is completely enclosed, gains its natural light from ceiling through a translucent plastic skylight. Floating ceiling in center reduces light intensity

Figure 2:21 Interior with wall of windows at rear. Edward H. Fickett, "Effective Control For Daylight," *Los Angeles Times,* August 4, 1957, K20. Renderings by C.R. Wojiechowski. Copyright © 1957 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

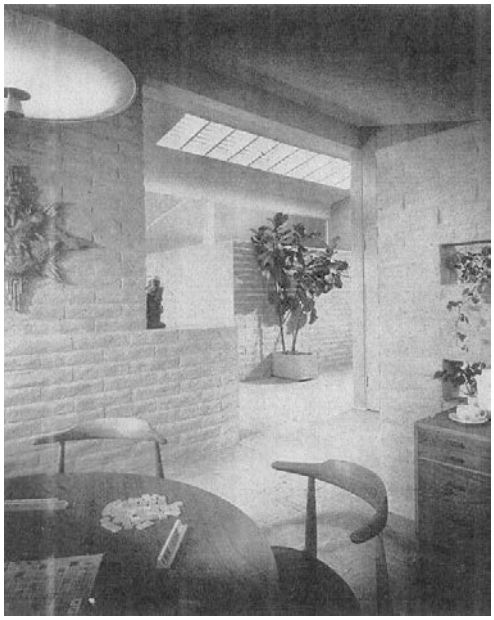


Figure 2:22 Post-and-beam construction offered Fickett an open plan in this tract house for Elwain Steinkamp. Skylights for control of natural light and rustic materials enhance the design. "Quality Houses at $10.50 a Square Foot Win NAHB Award," *House and Home,* March 1955, 160. Photo by George de Gennaro. Permission pending.

Fickett also expanded the role of the architect in the merchant building process by "running interference" for his builders by taking preliminary schemes to the local FHA and VA authorities for approval and making requested changes.[49] Additionally, Fickett made himself available to interpret the drawings to the building department and lending institution, obtain code variances and negotiate required changes. Drawing upon his considerable persuasive skills, field experience and negotiation skills cultivated during the building of the LORAN stations, Fickett effectively acted as a mediator. He built both a network and a reputation for being a pragmatic architect who could speak the language of contractors, builders, and bureaucrats alike. As Fickett put it, "I enjoy talking finances, land procurement and development, zoning, construction costs and merchandising techniques, not just land planning and architecture."[50]

Recognizing the importance of merchandising, Fickett also assembled a team of interior and landscape designers for the model homes. Fickett frequently partnered with William A. Manker, color consultant, and Eckbo, Royston and Williams on landscaping.

In 1953 alone, Ray Hommes built 2,000 Fickett houses plus Fickett apartments and commercial buildings. "A clever architect working closely with a merchant builder," Hommes explained, "makes an unbeatable combination. An architect with vision, ability and training can create something unique, functional and appealing and through research add new ideas in materials and equipment."[51] Despite the profitable relationship between Hommes and Fickett, Hommes turned to another architect, John Lindsay (recently departed from Palmer, Krisel and Lindsay) for the designs of later units of Meadowlark Park. Whether the split was based on compensation, exclusivity and non-competition, or other issues is not presently known. Ray Hommes continued developing in Southern California and Las Vegas until his death in 1983. Working with such architects as Barry Berkus and Associates and L.C. Major and Associates, Hommes never rejected the lesson he learned from Edward H. Fickett: the value of an architect in the development process.

Transforming the Compensation Model

By 1953, Edward H. Fickett had proved himself a valuable member of the development teams he worked on. There was, however, much skepticism among the developer community as to the price tag such value was worth. In 1953, Ray Hommes was willing to pay $20,000 per year to Fickett.[52] A future Hommes-Fickett contract (likely for Meadowlark Park) was noted as over $45,000.[53] Multiplied by his other clients, *House and Home* documented that Edward H. Fickett was netting over "$100,000-plus a

year from merchant builders alone."[54] So lucrative was this arrangement,[55] that the merchant builder segment accounted for 80% of his annual revenues and he all but eliminated the custom home from his practice. "The balance of Fickett's practice: occasional apartments, stores," noted *House and Home*. "The only custom jobs he's found time for recently have been residences for his successful builder clients—seven of them, [with project budgets] ranging up to $150,000 each."[56]

Many builders expected to (and did) procure a house plan for $10. Fickett's approach was entirely different; he sold the value of his design approach, cost-saving measures, and ancillary services. Through his successful relationships with early builders, he could demonstrate that the higher fees he charged were more than compensated by increased cost efficiencies, sales prices, and visibility. His fee of $75 per house for Mac-Bright builders was documented in *House and Hom*e by a lender indicating it added $1,000 per house to their salability.[57]

Again, Fickett, coordinated his fee structure with the business needs of builders. "I have always felt that the architect should not expect to clear a profit on the preparation of drawings, but derive all his profits from royalties obtained each time the house is **repeated**," he explained.[58] As such, Fickett's ideal compensation structure was a flat fee retainer for the development of final plans plus a royalty per house (often on a sliding scale for large developments). Such was proposed by Fickett in a 1953 issue of *House and Home*, which included a flat fee of $750 per design of each 1,500 square foot house (including plan, foundation plan, a maximum of three alternate elevation plans) interior elevations and details. A sliding scale of royalties was added to this ranging from $100 per 1-50 houses built, $75 per 51-100 houses, $50 per 101-200 houses, $35 per

200-1000 houses built and $25 each for every house built over 1,000. "Your success is my success," described Fickett in an article entitled "Frankly Speaking."[59]

Architectural Leadership, Consensus Building and Mediation

Given his ability to bridge conversations between such diverse constituencies as builders, architects, lenders and city officials, Fickett soon found it both to his personal and professional advantage to take a leadership role in trade organizations. Like his early mentor Sumner Spaulding, Fickett took an active role in the local AIA. In 1950 he sat on the local AIA Southern California Chapter's Ethics Committee, in 1956-7 was a member of the Joint Committee for the Home Building Industry with the NAHB and FHA, was Secretary of the Chapter in 1957-8, and Director of the Chapter from 1958-1960.

With respect to his work on the Joint AIA Committee for the Home Building Industry with the NAHB and FHA, one of his most significant accomplishments was "…helping convince the local FHA and VA to consider revising portions of their codes to meet low-cost building problems and local conditions."[60] Specifically, the local FHA and VA agreed to the use of concrete pads and elimination of interior bearing footings, use of extruded metal trim vs. wood casing, and higher stresses than normally permitted in the Minimum Property Requirements. Noted Fickett, "We have also sold them on the idea of contemporary design, the role of the architect in merchant building, and high commitments which reflect the use of good architectural services."[61]

In 1957, Fickett took his leadership to the national level with his appointment by Vice President Richard M. Nixon to the Federal Housing Advisory Board, on which he participated in the re-writing of the FHA Minimum Property Standards and establishing

architectural fee schedules. The purpose of this was to call attention to the importance of builders obtaining adequate architectural services. In 1958, Fickett became the National Chairman for the Committee for the Home Building Industry. As part of this committee he played a leadership role in working with the NAHB and FHA to establish the first schedule of fees for architects working with multi-family and residential developers.

During the 1960s, as President of the Southern California Chapter of the AIA, Fickett organized a joint AIA, Home Builders Association (HBA) and Building Contractors Association (BCA) committee to draft new zoning ordinances permitting residential planned committees and planned unit developments. The draft language was used as a basis for new zoning codes in the City of Los Angeles and Orange County. It was then considered a model best practice for other cities such as Tacoma and Olympia Washington.

Fickett also served as a board member of the United States Savings and Loan League Advisory Board during the early 1960s. As part of that group, he assisted in the preparation of a "Residential Construction Lending Guide" designed to encourage lenders to support quality residential planning and design.

As a result of these activities, Edward H. Fickett was admitted to the AIA College of Fellows in April 1969. By taking a leadership role on the local and national level, Fickett fostered healthy dialogue between the architects, contractors, planners, lenders, and policy makers with the net result that quality architectural ideas and innovations were absorbed into the large-scale production of single- and multi-family residential housing in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Architectural Ideas in Zero Gravity: From Tract House to Custom House

Although conventional wisdom holds that tract houses are a lesser version of the custom house an architect would create without the constraints of efficiency, budget, or mass production, Fickett's post-1960 work indicates otherwise. This is a period in which Fickett had the opportunity to express himself creatively in a number of projects — from custom homes to big-budget, prestige projects. Rather than use these commissions to create new avant-garde forms, Fickett applied his existing architectural language and ideas about efficiency to these projects.

During the 1960s, Fickett continued to use post-and-beam construction in tract housing to foster more modern spatial experiences on the interior — wrapped in conservative Mid-Century Modern designs on the exterior. Severin Construction Company's Grossmont Hills development in La Mesa is an important example of how Fickett's architectural language evolved incrementally during this period.

With less flat land available in Los Angeles County and rapidly growing Orange County, Southern California developers increasingly looked to San Diego for opportunity. The large flat area of La Mesa provided an ideal place for tract development. Nels Severin began developing with his brother U.C. Severin in 1941. By 1955, Severin's development activities peaked with 500 units per year.[62] The *Los Angeles Times* described Severin as "a leading exponent in the increased use of architect-designed houses in large scale developments."[63] Severin, like Fickett, took an active leadership role in policy and financing interests; he was a director and executive

committee member of the NAHB, an advisor to the FHA and the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

In 1960, Severin tapped Fickett for the Grossmont Hills project. Unlike many of his tract commissions during the 1950s, Fickett was responsible for the planning of the 160+ unit La Mesa development, including the siting and cadence of the homes.

For Grossmont Hills (1960), Fickett developed four basic plans with two exterior designs per plan. The three- or four-bedroom homes were again all rectangular in plan (some with garage forming an L-shape) and traditionally oriented to the street. The architectural cadence for the development relied on the mixture of styles and the occasional flopping of the floor plan (see Figure 2:23).[64] When compared with earlier planning exercises by A. Quincy Jones, Gregory Ain, or William Krisel, no significant innovation is apparent. However, it represented incremental innovation in planning for Severin for its more complex rotation of plans on a street.

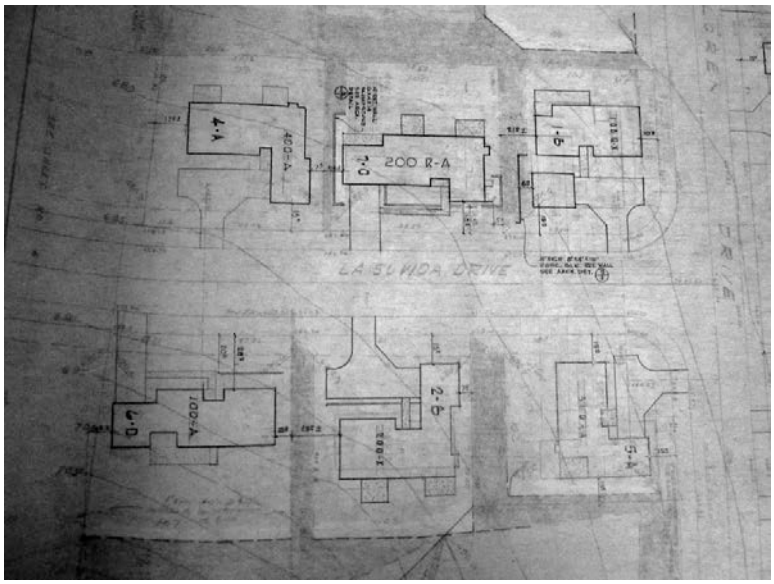


Figure 2:23 Grossmont Hills plans show various model numbers (e.g., 100, 200, 400). The designation of "200 R-A" indicates this is a transposition of the 200 plan. Tube 23, Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections.

Although the houses were post-and-beam construction, the elevation designs tended toward the Ranch style. The Montecito, Palo Alto, Hempstead, and Sequoia models were all Contemporary Ranch houses composed of rustic materials such as rough-textured vertical redwood siding, red cedar shakes, and masonry. The most unusual model, the Golden Dynasty, featured an Austronesian roofline[65] (see Figure 2:24). The brochure described it as "Oriental charm and elegance so suited to our western way of living…carefully detailed into this truly impressive house."[66] This model featured "specially designed" Oriental screens and room dividers (see Figure 2:24). Such amenities capitalized on a growing interest in Japanese architecture as featured in the shelter magazines.[67] Fickett's design for the Golden Dynasty, however, more closely resembled a Ranch Oriental house than a traditional Japanese home or even a Japanese-influenced avant-garde design such as the custom homes of Richard Dorman.

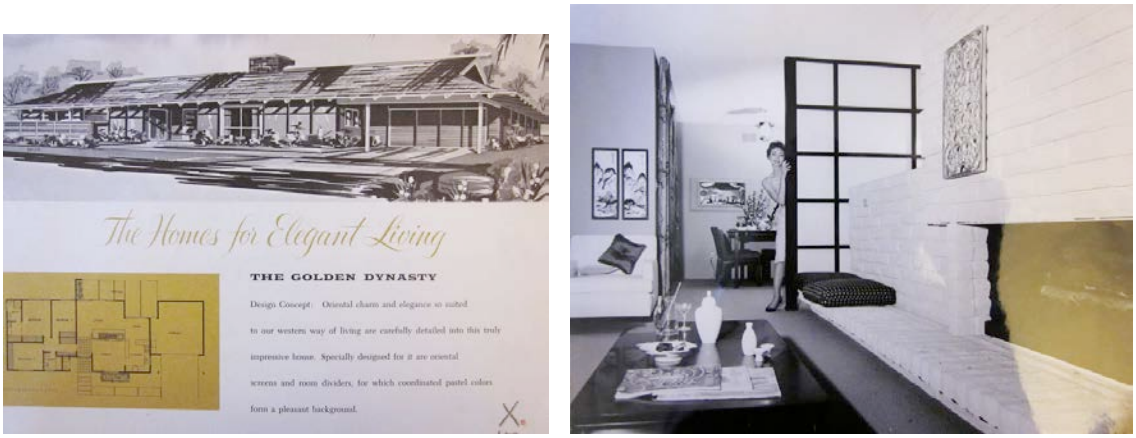


Figure 2:24 Traditional Ranch style of the Golden Dynasty model with Austronesian roof form features modern open plan and distinctive details. Photo by Larry Frost. "Severin-Grossmont San Diego, Job# 5905" Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.

Interior photographs of Grossmont Hills models, however, reveal open plan kitchens, partial-height masonry walls and clerestory windows — all of which give the

interiors a Mid-Century Modern feeling (see Figures 2:25 and 2:26). Comparing these homes to the Fickett designs for Sherman Park some ten years prior, the essentials remained unchanged: rectangular plans, post-and-beam construction, free plan, slumpblock brick and traditional styling. However, in Grossmont Hills a number of new amenities or styling cues are evident in Fickett's use of plaster ceilings and low-profile concrete hearths.

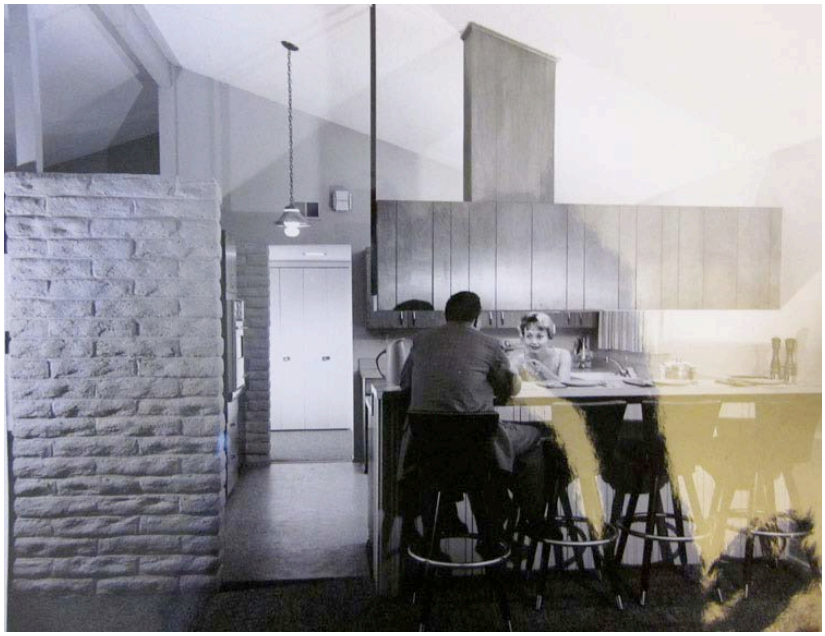


Figure 2:25 Post-and-beam construction opens plan to partial-height masonry wall. Ceilings are now plastered, rather than exposed. Photo by Larry Frost. "Severin-Grossmont San Diego, Job# 5905" Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.

Figure 2:26 Plastered (vs. exposed) post-and-beam ceiling, glass clerestory window and low concrete hearth were featured prominently in the Grossmont development. Photo by Larry Frost. "Severin-Grossmont San Diego, Job# 5905" Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.

The houses, which sold for $24,275 plus $7,000 for the lot ($31,275 total), ranged from 1,800 to 2,100 square feet and were considered a "luxury" development. Grossmont Hills received the National Merit Award from *Parents* magazine in 1961 and was judged to be the best $16-$25,000 home for families with children. In total, Grossmont Hills won seven awards from the various building and trade organizations. Like Sherman Park before it, at Grossmont Hills, Fickett designed a product line that responded to the needs of the developer, the changing tastes of the public and continued to bring modern spatial planning to tract house development. The changes were incremental, not radical, but contributed to increased quality in merchant-built housing.

In 1964, Fickett returned to San Diego County to begin designs for the large, prestigious new development of La Costa near Carlsbad. In contrast to the Severin

development of middle-class homes, La Costa was a visionary plan for a resort and living community with anticipated population of 40,000. La Costa was the project of Nevada's largest builder/developer team of Merv Adelson, Irwin Molasky and Harry Lahr. During the 1950s, Adelson, Molasky and Lahr developed a number of projects including the Desert Inn Hotel Golf Course Estates, the 1,500-home Paradise Palms development (designed by William Krisel), the Sunrise Hospital, the 200-unit Palms Apartments, and a luxury shopping center in Las Vegas. Fickett was tapped for La Costa as part of a dream team of designers that included renowned golf course designer, Dick Wilson, and national and international experts to assist with the development of the spa.

As early as March of 1965, the *Los Angeles Times* reported a potential connection between La Costa, its developers and organized crime. The *Times* identified the original purchase of the land at La Costa as a company in which Moe B. Dalitz held a controlling stock interest alongside Adelson, Molasky, Lahr and Allard Roen.[68] Dalitz and Roen were part owners of the Desert Inn and the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas. The *Times* also revealed, "According to testimony before the Kefauver Senate crime investigating committee, Dalitz was a prohibition-era rum runner and later a Cleveland gambling kingpin with crime syndicate connections."[69] Funded with $4 million in Teamsters' Pension Fund money, La Costa's association with the mafia ultimately became the subject of a March 1975 *Penthouse* magazine exposé entitled "Syndicate in the Sun." In response, La Costa filed a $599 million libel suit that was caught up in litigation for a decade. Colorful testimony regarding mob meetings and Watergate strategy sessions were documented in press coverage of the trial. The lawsuit, however, was ultimately settled with a letter of apology from the magazine.

Scandals aside, upon its opening in 1965, La Costa became one of the premier resorts on the West coast. Situated on 2,700 acres, the $300 million development was based on a master plan by Ruth and Krushkov in Berkeley. Development began in 1964 with the 7,200-yard golf course. The clubhouse building followed soon after, along with homes, a spa, tennis courts, hotel, equestrian trails and pool. The resort was a reflection of the 1960s trend toward resort living for upwardly mobile homeowners. It was marketed as "dedicated to the idea that the richest family life is possible only when every member has fun… this one spot offers activities for all ages."[70] La Costa quickly became a resort destination rivaling Palm Springs and drew heavily from the same crowd of Hollywood stars including Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Desi Arnaz. The "La Costa Lifestyle" became synonymous with sunshine, sports, glamour, pleasure, and elegance.

The La Costa image was deeply intertwined with its architecture. In 1964, co-developer Irwin Molasky described the resort as "…a happy meld of Spanish California and modern Southland functionalism."[71] The blend of the Mid-Century Modern and the rustic made Fickett a logical choice as architect and La Costa was one of Fickett's most ambitious projects (see Figures 2:27). First on the drawing board was the design for the 48,000 square-foot clubhouse. The $3 million T-shaped structure (see Figure 2:28) was a multi-level open plan based on the geometry of the hexagon. The large-pitched roof structure was supported by a series of very large wooden trusses with a central skylight that controlled the natural light. A central feature of the clubhouse was the cantilevered viewing deck oriented to the ninth and eighteenth holes of the golf course that provided

vistas of the surrounding hills and ocean as well. A temporary tower was raised prior to construction to ensure that the views would be as magnificent as intended.[72]

Figure 2:27 Irv Rosten, general manager of La Costa and Ed Fickett circa 1964. Courtesy of the Carlsbad City Library Carlsbad History Room.

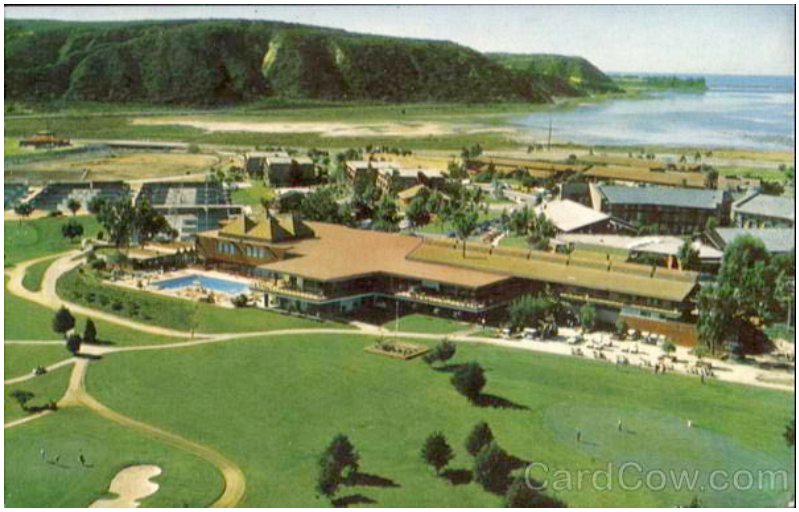


Figure 2:28 La Costa postcard shows T-shaped plan of the clubhouse with skylights on spine of long gabled roof form at right. Used with permission of La Costa Resort and Spa. http://www.cardcow.com/105405/rancho-la-costa-carlsbad-california/

Clubhouse plans indicate five levels divided by function: cart storage level, locker room level, office level, entry level/reception and mezzanine/balcony level. Public entertaining areas were on the highest levels and included a cocktail lounge, the main 350-seat dining room, private dining rooms, card and game rooms, and viewing deck (see Figure 2:29). The clubhouse also boasted barber and beauty shops, a pro-shop, lounges, and administrative offices.

Although the scale was significantly larger, Fickett designed the La Costa clubhouse with an elegant, yet informal residential feel. The plans reveal partial height masonry walls of Mexican Tecate brick, large expanses of glass, and double-high views of stained wooden trusses. The geometry of the design was suffused consistently throughout the design of the building and the resort (see Figures 2:30, 2:31, 2:32 and 2:33); the hexagonal geometry announced itself immediately at the welcoming porte-cochére, extended throughout the expression of the clubhouse structure, and was reflected in design details from the design of the cocktail bar to the hexagonal pattern on the front doors. Fickett's own design explorations for the cocktail bar note the need for a long hexagonal design (see Figure 2:34) to "use a bar shape that will tie into country club design."[73] In 2011, La Costa Resort and Spa was remodeled beyond recognition in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

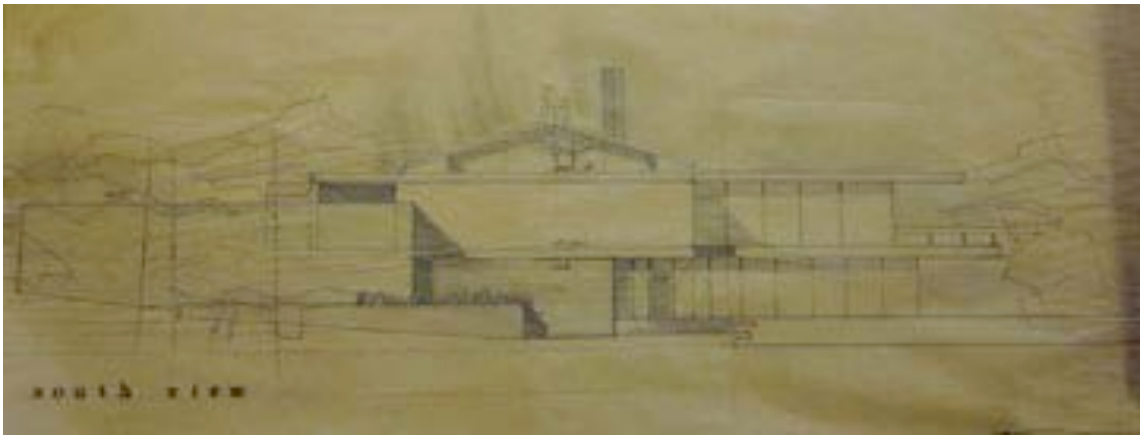


Figure 2:29 South elevation of the La Costa Clubhouse features roof spine with skylight and cantilevered viewing deck. Tube 74, Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections.

Figure 2:30 La Costa porte-cochère features hexagonal geometry and distinctive roof trusses. La Costa brochure, circa 1967. Used with permission of La Costa Resort and Spa.

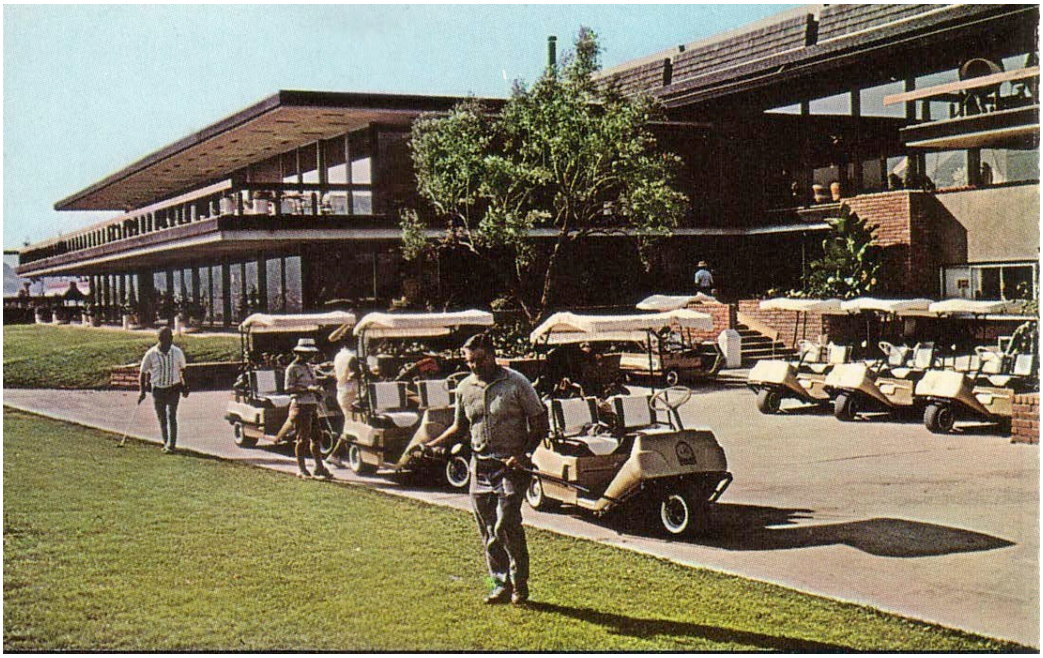


Figure 2:31 Viewing deck of La Costa clubhouse. Note stairway between cart storage level and locker room level. La Costa brochure, circa 1967. Used with permission of La Costa Resort and Spa.

Figure 2:32 Interior of reception desk shows high plastered ceilings, distinctive trusses, and stairway to mezzanine level. Golfer holding baby reinforces "family friendly" positioning of the resort. La Costa brochure, circa 1967. Used with permission of La Costa Resort and Spa.

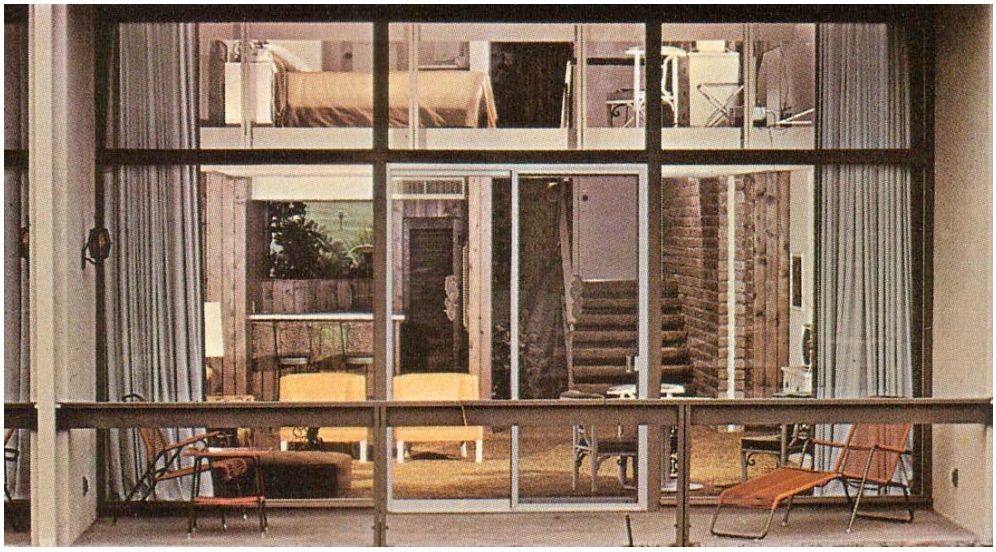


Figure 2:33 Guest rooms also use split-level design and feature floor-to-ceiling glass. La Costa brochure, circa 1967. Used with permission of La Costa Resort and Spa.

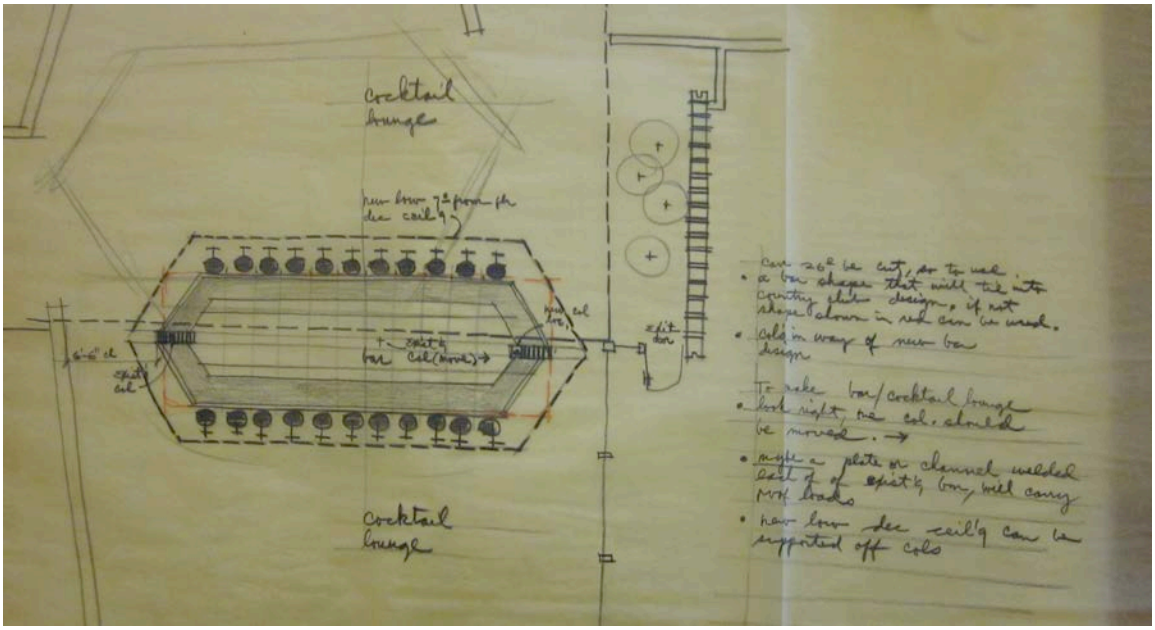


Figure 2:34 Final scheme presented for design of cocktail bar at La Costa to better integrate the design with the geometry of the overall resort design. Tube 74, Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections.

From the beginning, La Costa was conceived as a residential resort with 2,500 acres set aside for housing, with plans for a range of homes and condominiums at various price points. The first residential area opened shortly after the clubhouse in July of 1965, with a development of 130 homes on 60 acres. Designed with views oriented to the golf course, the six "model" houses ranged from two- to five-bedroom houses. Designed to showcase "how you will live at La Costa" they ranged from $44,500 to $65,000. Lots were also available starting at $11,500. "Sunken baths, reflection pools and wet bars" were listed among the amenities featured in the ads for the model homes.[74]

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Fickett "also designed several of the model homes."[75] Efforts to identify the specific homes have been thwarted by the disposal of all building permit records from the area prior to 1972 and the un-catalogued status of the Fickett papers. Two models (1965) featured in the *Los Angeles Times* ads contain elements consistent with previous Fickett designs of Contemporary Ranch houses as well as a contemporary Spanish design (see Figures 2:35 and 2:36).

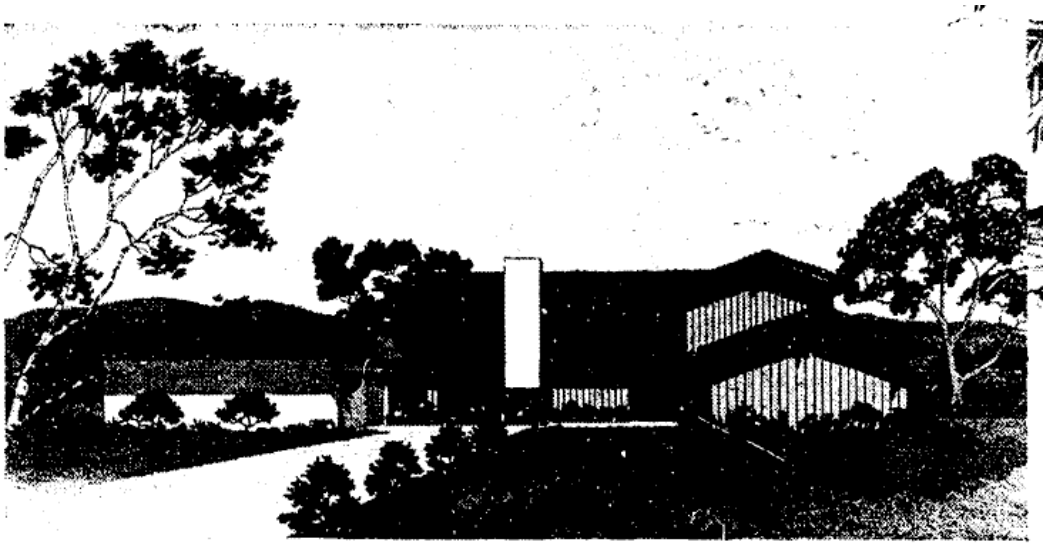


Figure 2:35 La Costa "model home" (1965) in rustic Ranch style. "Display Ad 119," *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 1965, 32. Copyright © 1965 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

Figure 2:36 La Costa "model home" (1965) featuring battered walls consistent with hexagonal geometry of resort. Drawing at left from "Display Ad 91," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1965, 17. Copyright © 1965 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission. Picture at right is of house on Estrella De Mar, now devoid of landscaping, as photographed by author in June 2011.

By 1966, Fickett's design for the La Costa Spa building (see Figure 2:37) was realized. Once again using the hexagon for inspiration, Fickett adapted the form in a way that more closely resembled the recent model home design of 1965 than the clubhouse building did. Therefore, in both of the public La Costa buildings a clear pattern of Fickett developing an architectural language in his tract or speculative housing work and later using it in his larger commissions can be observed.

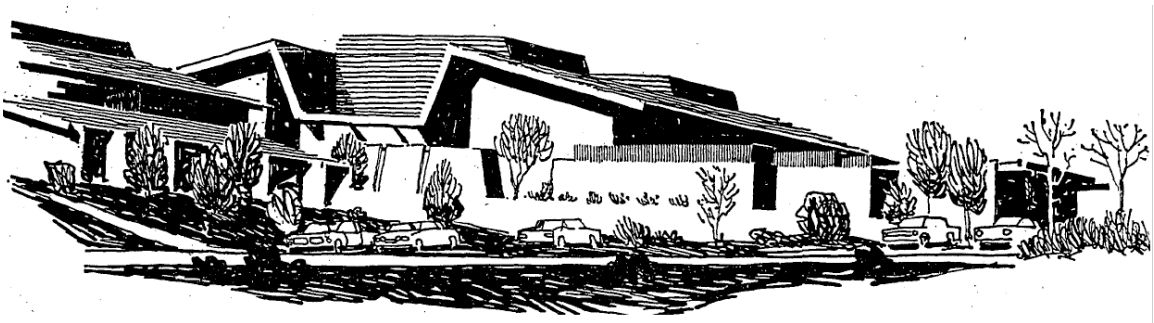


Figure 2:37 Building for La Costa Spa (1966). "Spa and Golf Course Spur Development," *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1966, N10. Copyright © 1966 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

A final example of this pattern in Fickett's architecture is evidenced by a custom home the architect designed in La Costa for the developer, Merv Adelson (circa 1963-1965). A review of the Fickett files on the project reveals that Fickett employed the exact same plan for the Adelson Residence at La Costa that he had designed for Adelson for the Desert Inn Country Club Estates in August of 1963. Two years later, in 1965 when Adelson contemplated the building of his own house at La Costa, Fickett simply replicated the plan for the San Diego County property. The 8,000 square foot house was constructed at 7242 Arenal Lane in 1965-1966.

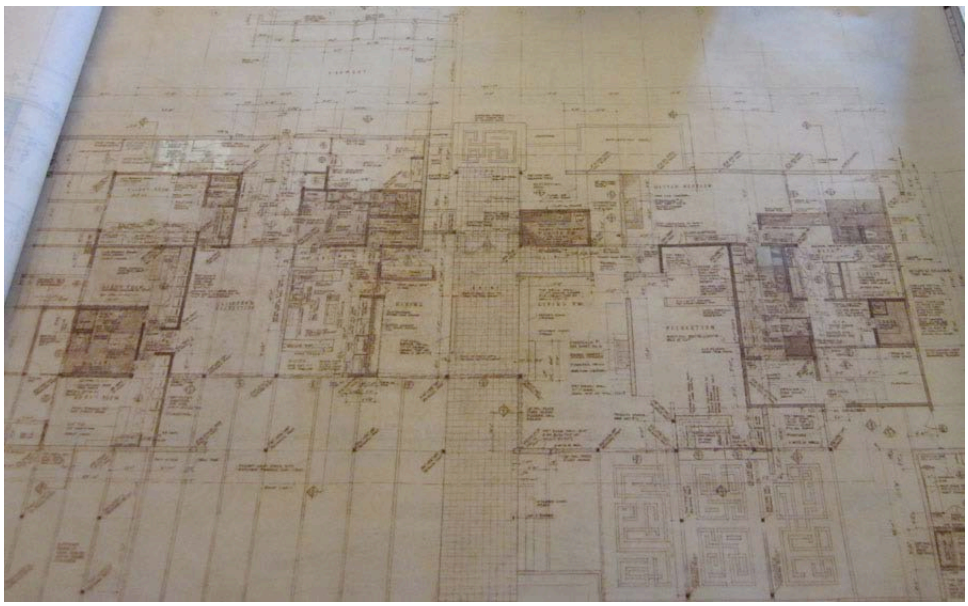


Figure 2:38 Adelson Residence Plan (1965-196). Tube 74, Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections.

The plan and the materials of the Adelson Residence share more in common with the Grossmont Hills subdivision than they do with either the speculative houses designed for La Costa or the geometries of the Resort and Spa. In plan, the Adelson Residence is composed of two square plans (one for a children's zone and one for the

adult/entertaining zone) bisected by a central entry spine (see Figure 2:38). The architectural language of the house is based on post-and-beam construction (this time using large gluelam beams to span the large scale of the house). The house features a plastered, low-pitched, side-gabled roof, partial-height slumpblock walls and a low concrete fireplace hearth, as found in Grossmont Hills (see Figures 2:39, 2:40 and 2:41). An open plan allows for large integrated spaces in the living, dining, and recreation rooms. The entire rear elevation facing the golf course is floor to ceiling glass. Traditional materials used include rustic quarry tile in the entrance. A reflecting pool and wet bar are elements from the La Costa model homes that are integrated here. The integration of finer woods and details in the Adelson Residence provide a more luxurious feeling to this home. However, Fickett uses these materials in combination with inexpensive materials such as the quarry tile and slumpblock that satisfy the architect's need for efficiency in materials.

Figure 2:39 Living room of Adelson Residence (1965-1966) featuring open plan, brick fireplace as divider, plaster-covered post-and-beam ceiling with gable roofline. Photo by Fritz Taggart. Used with permission.

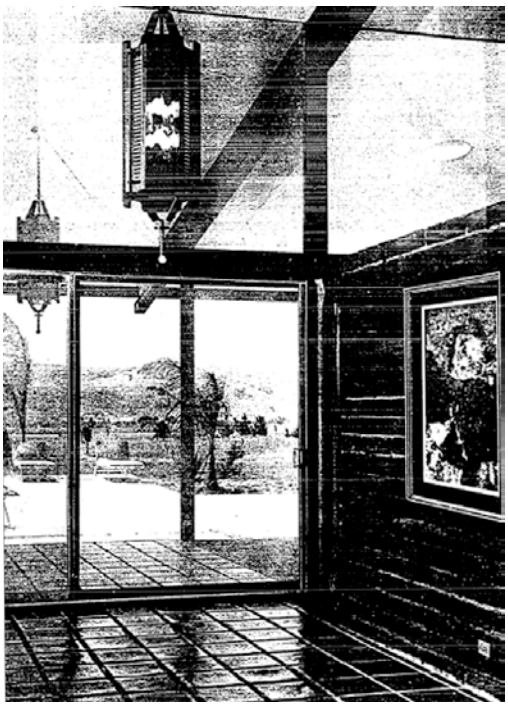


Figure 2:40 Floor-to-ceiling glass at rear of Adelson Residence (1965-1966) shows use of glazed tile for interior floor covering with partial-height art wall at right. Photo by Fritz Taggart. Used with permission.

Figure 2:41 A similar fireplace as room divider appears in Fickett's West Los Angeles development for Elwain Steinkamp in 1955. Maynard L. Parker, photographer. Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

A Final Word on Edward H. Fickett

Edward H. Fickett accomplished what many architects in the postwar period talked about: he brought architecture to the merchant-built house. Through his practice and his leadership, he helped improve the quality of tract housing in Southern California and across the nation. His construction background, training, and LORAN construction experience uniquely pre-disposed him for the job; and Sumner Spaulding provided an important role model for the young architect in a time when housing construction became a national priority.

With respect to design, Fickett's improvements were incremental and evolutionary rather than revolutionary. However, Fickett's "modified modern" tract home was based on more than just a series of styling cues. An evolution of spatial design, his open interior spaces were combined with a less experimental architectural language making him simultaneously accessible to developers and the public, but not avant-garde enough to be well-received by the critics. By decoupling post-and-beam construction from a rigorously modern post-and-beam aesthetic, he moved both his developer clients and the public incrementally toward better quality architecture. Although the modern Ranch style houses of Cliff May approached this idea, May's early 1950s prefabricated designs sold to land developers in Long Beach and Denver under the partnership with fellow architect Chris Choate, did not factor merchant builders into the equation.[76]

Careful examination of the architect's work reveals how Fickett's architectural language trickled upward into his custom and prestige commissions. Here he could often expand on the free plan of his spaces and more effectively manipulate the quality

of light in his architecture — without sacrificing the cost-efficient and rustic materials he appreciated. This "architecture in zero gravity" where ideas flow from the bottom up (and from the most pragmatic of building experiences) was ideally suited to the times. It resonated with a population of tract-home owning empty-nesters seeking homes reflective of their increasing affluence and desire for leisure time.

Architects of the like of Frank Lloyd Wright and R.M. Schindler found inspiration in the vernacular architectural forms of the native southwest. Fickett found inspiration in his own vernacular forms and the principals of efficiency on which they were based. Fickett was proud of the sheer volume of his work — mentioning it frequently in marketing materials and his AIA applications for Fellowship. His prolific practice, however, undermined and overshadowed the visibility of his higher-quality work as depicted by the La Costa Resort and Spa and the Adelson Residence.

In postwar America, architects and builders often spoke about their desire to apply the best practices of the automobile industry to housing. In the auto industry, the largest selling models of cars, by far, are mid-priced sedans not high-end sports cars. While sports cars capture the attention of designers and critics, they represent a niche market. Among sedans, the leaders are those that can bring a level of performance and sophistication to a utilitarian product. Edward H. Fickett never lost sight of the fact that he was, in fact, creating a product. His merchant-built homes were innovative because they brought incrementally better performance and sophistication. On occasion, Fickett would produce a "luxury sedan" (a.k.a., custom home or prestige commission) of superior performance and sophistication —only to be judged by sports-car standards.

Edward H. Fickett made significant contributions to improving the quality of the merchant-built house and used that experience to develop architectural language for a true modified modern aesthetic. This new insight is important for the future evaluation of Fickett's work and his architectural legacy.

Chapter Two Endnotes

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[1] Edward H. Fickett, "Nomination for Fellowship," September 24, 1963, The American Institute of Architects Archives, http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/F-H/FickettEdwardHale.pdf (accessed May 25, 2011).

[2] Edward H. Fickett, "Reflections on the Home Design Clinic," *AIA Journal* (November 1960): 87.

[3] David Smiley, "Making the Modified Modern." *Perspecta* 32 (2001): 33-54. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567281 (accessed December 28, 2010).

[4] This land was re-subdivided in the late 1880s by speculators like William Workman.

[5] Los Angeles Department of Public Works, "Tract Map MD3-178," April 6, 1876. http://engvault.lacity.org/images2/tif/tape023/dvd0263/images001075000/la001074586.tif (accessed May 25, 2011).

[6] 1880 United States, Federal Census, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed March 14, 2010).

[7] 1910 United States, Federal Census, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed March 14, 2010).

[8] "The Fickett Formula: Good Design Works Both Ways," *House and Home*, March 1953, 132.

[9] Edward H. Fickett, "AIA Application for Corporate Membership," November 15, 1949, The American Institute of Architects Archives, http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/F-H/FickettEdwardHale.pdf (accessed May 25, 2011).

[10] "New Night School to Be Opened," *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1932, D3, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[11] "American Development of Architecture Urged," *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1934, 23, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Edward H. Fickett, "AIA Application for Corporate Membership."

[14] Refer to Deborah Howell-Ardila's MHP thesis from the University of Southern California, "Writing Our Own Program: The USC Experiment in Architectural Pedagogy, 1930-1960."

[15] "Tract Study for Class," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1937, E5, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[16] Art Center, "Art Center's History," http://www.artcenter.edu/accd/about/history.jsp (accessed May 25, 2011).

[17] "Display Ad 32," *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1935, B5, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[18] Although various sources, especially the web-based sources of the last fifteen years claim that Edward H. Fickett graduated from USC and held a Master's degree

from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), there is no objective evidence to support this. Fickett's own application for AIA membership from 1949, as well as his applications for admission to the AIA College of Fellows from 1963 and 1968 specifically indicate he did not receive a degree from USC or from Art Center. None of these applications make any mention of attendance at MIT. Moreover, a letter from the Office of the Registrar at MIT to the author dated May 9, 2011 certifies that there is "no student record of attendance or degrees awarded" to Edward H. Fickett.

[19] Edward H. Fickett, "AIA Application for Corporate Membership."

[20] Elizabeth A.T Smith, ed., *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), 236.

[21] "Display Ad 28," *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1940, A9, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[22] "House in the Sun Opened," *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1940, E4, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[23] "House in the Sun," *California Arts and Architectur*e, February 1940, 22-23.

[24] Historical Section Public Information Division U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, August 1, 1946, *The Coast Guard at War IV, LORAN, Volume II*, 198. http://www.uscg.mil/history/STATIONS/loran_volume_2.pdf (accessed May 26, 2011).

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Jahn and June Robbins, "The Great Do-It-Yourself Boom," *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1953, I7, http://proquest.com (accessed March 24, 2011).

[29] Edward H. Fickett, AIA, "Frankly Speaking," *AIA Journal* (September 1961): 27.

[30] "The Fickett Formula," 133.

[31] The Granada Hills tract contained approximately 100 homes, the Sacramento tract 60. Even in the larger Northern California based tracts, phased openings rarely exceeded 200 units. Greenmeadow I in Palo Alto was 180 units and followed by Greenmeadow II with 83 units.

[32] "Quality Houses at $10.50 a Square Foot Win NAHB Award," *House and Home*, March 1955, 160-161.

[33] In his article "Making the Modified Modern," David Smiley writes extensively about the role of the shelter magazines and department stores in shaping the modern aesthetic of postwar consumer culture. He points to architects such as Rudolph Matern who integrated modern detailing inro more traditional forms. While such early efforts are significant and pre-date the work of Fickett, it is important to note that they were used on traditional construction methods rather than on post-and-beam construction methods. The latter enabled Fickett to manipulate spatial experience an open up the plan.

[34] "Display Ad 81, " *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 1949, E2, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[35] "The Fickett Formula," 134.

[36] "Article 29," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1952, D8, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[37] "38,000 Inspect Model Houses," *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1952, F8, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[38] "House for Speculation 2, *Arts and Architecture*, March 1953, 28.

[39] "The Fickett Formula," 137.

[40] Ibid.

[41] "House for Speculation 2," *Arts & Architec*ture, March 1953, 28.

[42] "Display Ad 103, " *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1952, 3F4, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[43] "The Fickett Formula," 136.

[44] "The Fickett Formula," 136.

[45] Edward H. Fickett, "Effective Control for Daylight," *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1957, K20, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[46] "House Designed to Be Trucked to Site," *House and Home*, June 1956, 148.

[47] "Modern Design Can Create a Nostalgic Setting," *House and Home*, October 1956, 172.

[48] Fickett, "Effective Control for Daylight."

[49] "The Fickett Formula," 139.

[50] Fickett, "Frankly Speaking," 27.

[51] "The Fickett Formula," 132.

[52] Ibid.

[53] "The Fickett Formula," 173.

[54] "The Fickett Formula," 132.

[55] According to the Social Security Administration, the average annual income in the United States in 1953 was just over $3,000. http://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/AWI.html (accessed March 14, 2011).

[56] "The Fickett Formula," 132.

[57] "The Fickett Formula," 173.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Fickett,"Frankly Speaking," 27.

[60] "The Fickett Formula," 173.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Francis Mulcahy, "Retirement City Planned," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1961, P1, http://proquest.com (accessed June 10, 2011).

[63] Ibid.

[64] The term flopping is used to describe the inversion of an image (such as a photographic negative) so that the right and left sides are transposed.

[65] The Austronesian roofline comes from the vernacular houses found throughout the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

[66] Grossmont Hills Sales Brochure, "Severin-Grossmont San Diego, Job# 5905" Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.

[67] For example, in 1960, *House Beautiful* devoted two full issues, August and September, to Japan. Articles included "The Japanese House: The Most Flexible House in the World," and "Garden a Part of House."

[68] "New Teamster Loans Linked to Vegas Gambling Names," *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1965, B, http://proquest.com (accessed June 10, 2011).

[69] Ibid.

[70] "Display Ad 119," *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 1965, 32, http://proquest.com (accessed June 10, 2011).

[71] Tom Cameron, "$300 Million Community Planned Near San Diego," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1964, G1, http://proquest.com (accessed June 10, 2011).

[72] La Costa Resort, "A History of Excellence," http://www.lacosta.com/PressReleaseTemplate_aspx?id=2272 (accessed May 27, 2011).

[73] Tube 74, Edward H. Fickett Papers, University of Southern California, Special Collections, Los Angeles, California.

[74] "Display Ad 119," *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 1965, 32, http://proquest.com (accessed June 10, 2011).

[75] "Six La Costa Models Make Debut Today," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1965, L32, http://proquest.com (accessed June 10, 2011).

[76] Daniel P. Gregory, *Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2008), 128.

CHAPTER THREE:
RICHARD L. DORMAN: COMMERCIAL INSPIRATION FOR TRACT HOME DESIGN

Richard L. Dorman (1922-2010) was a modern architect who skillfully navigated the need for beauty and efficiency in postwar American architecture. His prolific career spanned the demand for industrial, commercial, residential and institutional buildings serving the Baby Boom generation. His aesthetic, grounded in the simplicity and rigor of the International Style, was tempered by Asian influences and fueled by a generational drive to never be satisfied, never yield to type, and believe anything was possible. After just six years of independent practice, Dorman had won over 25 national and regional awards, was featured on the cover of *Life* magazine as a member of "The Take-Over Generation,"[1] and completed nearly one hundred projects ranging from modest single-family residences to multi-million dollar commercial and office buildings.[2] Clients for these projects were often the leaders in Southern California residential, industrial or commercial development.

Unlike Fickett, Dorman was not responsible for tens of thousands of merchant-built houses during the 1950s. During this decade, Dorman's developer projects were mostly speculative houses and a large number of commercial and industrial buildings. As this chapter will demonstrate, it was the latter that proved most influential in his tract home designs of the 1960s and 1970s.

To this end, the following pages describe the important impacts of his early years, including his military service, education at USC and employment in a corporate architecture firm. This is followed by a look at selected projects for Southern California residential and industrial developers during the 1950s. Although this section expands the discussion well beyond single-family residential design, this foundation will prove

important for the final section of this chapter: in-depth analysis of Dorman's tract house designs for Huntington Harbour in 1965. In this analysis, the project will be compared and contrasted with his other residential work to demonstrate how these designs are not merely dumbed-down versions of custom homes, but an altogether different product that shares more in common with his commercial retail work than his custom or even speculative houses.

Early Years:

From the very beginning, it appeared that nothing would be easy for Richard Lee Dorman. He was born in Los Angeles, California on November 27, 1922. The future architect was abandoned as a baby; his mother never picked him up from the hospital. He was adopted by Bertha M. Dorman and Charles L. Dorman.[3] Bertha and her husband were older (48 and 62, respectively) when they took in the orphaned boy. Bertha was trained as a nurse and this may have played a role in her adoption of the baby. Charles was engaged in the real estate business. A former traveling salesman,[4] Charles came to Los Angeles from Norfolk, Virginia and by the mid-teens he turned his sales skills to real estate.[5] Charles Dorman loved Richard's early drawings and "…hung them on his office walls."[6] But while Richard was in high school, his 80-year old father, passed away — leaving a 66 year-old widow and teenage son.

Just six months after graduating from Los Angeles Polytechnic High School, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The Army drafted Dorman in 1942. With an interest in becoming a helicopter pilot, Dorman attended flight school, but his exceptional height of more than six feet made him too tall for many aviation assignments including that of

fighter pilot.[7] Eventually he was assigned to the 7th Air Force to fly B-24 "Liberator" bombers in the Central Pacific.

The story of the 7th Air Force mirrors Dorman's humble beginnings. Originally formed in 1940 to protect the Hawaiian Islands and given the nickname "the Pineapple Air Force," the 7th Air Force was almost completely decimated in the attack on Pearl Harbor. It suffered hundreds of casualties and hundreds of its aircraft were damaged or destroyed. The 7th Air Force had much to prove. As a co-pilot, Dorman flew 35 missions on the B-24 "Tropic Knight" (see Figure 3:1) including raids on over the Marshall, Bonin, Marianna, Wake and Caroline Islands, Saipan and "practically every other island in that area" in preparation for amphibious invasions.[8] On his 13th mission, Dorman and the "Tropic Knight" crew took enemy fire requiring that they circle several times before successfully dropping their payload. Dorman was praised as a hero by the *Los Angeles Times*, and awarded the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf clusters as well as the Distinguished Flying Cross. By 1944, Dorman and his crew had "…dropped 167,000 pounds of trouble on the Japs…and put in 405 combat hours."[9]

Figure 3:1 The crew of the B-24 "Tropic Knight" on an unknown island in the Pacific. Co-pilot Richard L. Dorman is kneeling at center of front row. http://www.b24bestweb.com/tropicknight1.htm Permission pending.

The characteristics of military service: discipline, rigor, teamwork, problem-solving, a sense of urgency, invincibility, "can-do" spirit and accomplishment were all attributes that Dorman would later harness to help make him a successful architect. In a 1945 *House Beautiful* article, a returning veteran writing of the returning serviceman's expectations for his new home argued that "the returning soldier would have little patience for refinement and pretense, and would instead demand that his house be comfortable and practical. These were men whose lives depended on technology, who lived intimately with it."[10] Dorman's exposure to wartime technology and new materials would later be evident in his creative use of plywood in his residential designs.

The return to civilian life for many World War II veterans often swiftly brought marriage and a family. This was the case for Richard Dorman. Months after returning from the war, Dorman married Jean W. Cates, a 20-year old girl he had met while

assigned to a base in Waco, Texas. Within a year, the newlyweds welcomed their first son, Richard Dorman Jr. To support his new responsibilities, Dorman did what many returning men did: he took advantage of the education provided by the GI Bill. With an interest in mechanical engineering likely sparked by his time in the service, Dorman packed the family in a 1942 Ford hitched to a trailer with no brakes and drove to University of Illinois. There he attended the architecture program in the College of Fine Arts and Applied Arts from September 1946 to May 1947.[11] After a year of study, Dorman was disillusioned. An interview with his son Grant Dorman, revealed that his father later described the experience as limiting: "those [engineers] are the people that tell you no…you *can't do* something."[12]

Dorman returned to Los Angeles and enrolled in the architecture program at USC. He paid his tuition by taking jobs in a stone yard, a display studio, and working as a truck driver. Dorman's potential career paths of study revealed his pragmatic nature: demand for architects and mechanical engineers was on the rise based on the anticipated building boom and the advent of air conditioning. Under USC's dean Arthur B. Gallion, Dorman received a practical architectural education with an emphasis on small house development, an avant-garde modern aesthetic, and post-and-beam construction. Dorman attended USC from fall 1947 through June 1951.

The USC curriculum of the late 1940s focused on providing students with a practical and pragmatic education that would act as a springboard for students' immediate hiring into the profession. Dorman benefited directly from this system. As Deborah Howell-Ardila points out, "Gallion built on the foundations in place and expanded the school according to the pressing issues of the day: housing, planning,

industrial design, and landscape architecture."[13] In addition to the continuing integration of related practices and the multi-disciplinary approach to learning, Gallion emphasized the development of practical skills associated with the building of houses as well as the cultivation of the business skills needed to establish and maintain a successful architectural practice. For example, in 1948-1949 students designed the 1,400 square foot "Villageaire" in Baldwin Hills. This $16,500 "practical study project" was financed by California Federal Savings and Loan Association the objective of which "appears not to have been cutting-edge design but FHA backing and consumer acceptability."[14] More Ranch style than avant-garde modern, the house was "the result of six months of discussion among the students, faculty, the funding agency and real estate professionals during which the students sought to learn features preferred by prospective buyers."[15] The Villageaire made its public debut in 1950. Although there is currently no direct evidence linking Dorman with this project, at a minimum it can be assumed he was aware of it.

The program also cultivated instructors who were both USC alumni and practicing architects in Los Angeles. As a result, the USC School of Architecture acted as a "farm system'' for Los Angeles architecture firms in the postwar period that needed a steady supply of designers and draftsman to support their rapidly expanding businesses.

In addition to his core architecture classes at USC, Richard Dorman received training in city planning, design, architectural history and professional practices. Dorman would have attended Cal Straub's third-year design class focused on planning. Other core classes included "Estimating and Construction Costs" and "Modern

Materials" which focused on the integration of new materials and technologies. Unusual for its time, three years of required Professional Practices courses included "…courses on professional relations, the organization of office management, legal aspects, building finance and detailed courses on the preparation of working drawings."[16] Dorman would have also been required to take "Planning the Postwar Home," "…a nontechnical course in architectural planning for the prospective homeowner" which emphasized siting, materials and methods, landscaping, cost analysis and financing related to "modern living in single or multiple dwelling types."[17]

While at USC, Dorman would have been exposed to such instructors as Calvin Straub, Garret Eckbo, Whitney Smith, and A. Quincy Jones. As Howell-Ardila points out, "the objective was to provide pragmatic training in 'true California' design."[18] According to professor Clayton M. Baldwin, USC believed "…that training of students should be practical as well as theoretical."[19] This philosophy manifested itself in many real-world assignments: from a freshman design project for a hillside house based on a real Los Angeles site, to the sophomore assignment for the design of a desert house.[20] In later years, Dorman would design such projects several times during his career. While professor (and later dean) Calvin Straub would profess no "preconception or following any style or fashion cliché,"[21] a study of student projects as well as the built work of many USC students indicates a clear preference for post-and-beam construction, the open plan, and the integration of interior and exterior spaces in keeping with the California lifestyle.

An important aspect of USC's influence on Richard Dorman's design aesthetic is evidenced by the 1952 "USC Study House." Designed by the class following Dorman's

graduation in 1951, it still provides insight into the kind of design direction being fostered by the program in the early 1950s. Anticipated to be built in three phases, the house accommodated changing needs, expansion and flexibility over time. This was also in keeping with Straub's philosophy of separate zones for living that "defined spaces for social activities or seclusion."[22] The Study House was characterized by an open plan with the addition of new pavilions for expansion (tangentially attached or separate from) existing spaces. As the new square footage was added to the house, each of these new modules created new exterior spaces and new opportunities for the visual (and real) integration of interior and exterior spaces. This same approach is evidenced in Dorman's work. The ideas Dorman learned at USC provided the seeds for the development of his own architectural language based on dynamic pavilion and pod forms, with the eventual evolution of these volumes in section.

So practical was Dorman's training, that he began working for architectural firms prior to his graduation. The birth of a daughter, Gail, in 1949 likely also provided incentive for employment. In the fall of 1950, Dorman spent three months as a designer in the Pasadena office of Donald Neptune.[23] Neptune's work was mostly institutional with an emphasis on educational buildings. At the time Dorman was in the office, it is possible that Netpune's plans for the Marine Corps Training Facilities at 29 Palms (1952) were on the boards. Following that short tenure, Dorman became a draftsman in the office of Armet and Davis, where he was employed for a year and a half.

Both USC graduates, Louis Armet (USC, 1939) and Eldon Davis (USC, 1942) formed a partnership in 1947. Along with John Lautner's expressive design for "Googie's (1949)," Armet and Davis' work would ultimately become synonymous with

the term "Coffee Shop Modern" coined by author, Alan Hess.[24] Dorman would likely have been present in the office for the firm's very first coffee shop commission, Clock's (1951). A modern transparent form prominently intersecting with a large red triangular sign, Clock's was designed to attract passing motorists. Dorman's time with Armet and Davis, though not a prestigious firm, served him well in supporting his family and positioned him for employment upon graduation. Upon graduation from USC in 1951, Dorman was immediately hired by Welton Becket and Associates.

Formerly Wurdeman and Becket, Welton Becket assumed sole proprietorship of the firm in 1949 after William Wurdeman's death. According to architectural historian Thomas Hines, Welton Becket and Associates was "the largest and most consistent in its development of the ethic and aesthetic pretensions of the International Style."[25] Hines continues, "More than any other West Coast office, Becket pushed that move from its canonical successes in small and medium-sized buildings to structures of the largest scale."[26]

Welton Becket and Associates was the prototype for the concept of corporate architect— a large, multi-regional and ultimately multi-national firm serving primarily corporate, commercial and institutional clients with large and prestigious commissions. Unlike many boutique firms of the same period, Becket's articulated philosophy stressed client service, return on investment, and other business tenets often not addressed by architects. According to Becket:

> As architects and engineers, our professional goal is to design buildings of distinctive beauty and maximum efficiency. However, if the buildings we plan do not directly or indirectly produce income for our clients— either through increased sales, cost reducing operations, or highly saleable space— we have no cause for pride no matter how many awards we win. We must produce

> attractive, functional buildings. But above all, we must produce sound investments for our clients.[27]

Becket's design philosophy also had business implications. The firm's credo of "Total Design" was:

> …an architectural philosophy and practice that embrace all the services required to analyze any architectural problem, perform the necessary studies and research to solve the problem and translate the solution into a building or a group of buildings complete down to the last detail of furniture, sculpture and other art, landscaping and furnishings, even to ashtrays, menus and matchboxes.[28]

As Hines points out, "The success of the Total Design philosophy depended on recruiting design talent from all the areas."[29] As a result, the firm recruited heavily from USC. Although Becket himself graduated from the University of Washington, a long line of talented USC graduates designed for the firm over the years including Harry Widman (1932), Charles B. McReynolds (1953), Fred Sarni Hassouna (1956), Dan Morganelli (1955), and Peter Munselle (1953). In 1951, Becket tapped USC graduate Richard Dorman to join them.

As Dorman entered the company, Welton Becket and Associates was receiving national publicity for its most recent project with Fritz R. Burns, the "House of Tomorrow" (1951). The project was a redesign of their previous collaboration, "The Postwar House" (1943). In addition to its headquarters in Los Angeles, the firm already had offices in New York and San Francisco. Welton Becket and Associates would grow substantially during the 1950s, and again in the 1960s, to become one of the largest and most prolific firms in the country. By 1964, the firm had won 66 local, national and international design awards.[30]

During Dorman's tenure, the firm grew from 44 employees to over 400.[31] Dorman was hired as a designer, rose to Assistant Director, and was ultimately elected to the position of Vice President.[32] Dorman ascended to the top of the firm's large, hierarchical corporate structure. Although barred from an ownership/partnership position by Becket, employees were fairly compensated and received generous benefits packages.[33]

The challenges and opportunities of corporate architecture at Becket's office were expressed by the alternating views of their employees. On one hand, it was characterized as "The only office I could find, after several tries, where they don't try to force your work into some preconceived design theory." On the other, "A good place to work for a while to learn how to handle big buildings, but eventually, I'd like to produce significant buildings on my own."[34] Dorman found Welton Becket and Associates a sink or swim environment where large prestigious commissions were given to young designers. As he had in his military service, Dorman rose to the occasion.

Dorman's projects at the firm helped him develop as an architect and prepare him for his own practice. Dorman was in charge of the designs for a variety of prestigious projects: Southland Life Center (1959), Habana Hilton Hotel (1958), McCulloch Residence, Rancho Mirage (1955), Meier & Frank, Salem, Oregon (1955), studies for Henry Kaiser's Hawaiian Village (1957) on Honolulu, and many other commercial structures and shopping centers.[35] According to Munselle, a former Becket employee and partner of Dorman's during the late 1960s, "Woody [Maynard Woodard] really allowed you to be independent…whatever you wanted the design to be, he would let you do. The Southland Life Center in Dallas was all Dick Dorman."[36]

By 1956, however, Dorman decided to form his own firm. According to Richard Dorman's sons, Becket did not take the news well — suggesting that Dorman would ultimately return to his employment.[37] Despite this, Dorman maintained good relations with several Becket colleagues who acted as references for his admission to the AIA.[38]

By the time Dorman opened his own firm, Richard Dorman & Associates in May 1956, he had developed the architectural language, design philosophy, and practical building experience that would guide his solo design career. His pragmatic USC education that emphasized beauty in design along with the economics of efficiency in building had been realized. However, building a solo practice would inevitably rely on the projects of Southern California developers.

Working for Developers: Spec Houses, Industrial and Commercial Buildings

Over the course of his career, Richard Dorman worked with some of the foremost postwar developers in Southern California. Among them were Fritz Burns and Henry Kaiser for whom Dorman worked on early studies for their Hawaiian Village Hotel during his time in Becket's office. Dorman was apparently comfortable enough in the relationship with Burns to list the developer as a reference for his 1956 admission to the AIA.[39]

During the first five years of his practice, Richard Dorman designed seventy-five speculative residential commissions for developer-builders.[40] Dorman prided himself on "…providing better design, drawings, and supervision, not normally found in this type of work."[41] Based on his training at USC, Dorman was well positioned to bring conceptual advances and innovative materials to the field. Three of these commissions received national recognition and awards.[42]

Most notably, Dorman worked on a series of speculative (spec) houses for Los Angeles developer, Elwain Steinkamp. Steinkamp had been a developer of small subdivisions of tract houses in Los Angeles dating back to the 1930s.[43] By the late 1950s and early 1960s, Steinkamp's strategy for the development of the hills above Bel Air and Encino was to build a large number of speculative houses while simultaneously selling undeveloped parcels for custom homes. Steinkamp's company for this, Modern Trend Construction, engaged Dorman to design several of these houses in the Royal Woods and Sherman Oaks Estates areas. By June 1956, 54 speculative homes were on display in Sherman Oaks Estates alone. For the most part, Steinkamp leveraged the architects' names in his advertising campaigns. Those names included Dorman, Fickett, and Krisel.

Steinkamp encouraged Dorman to innovate and experiment. One result of this collaboration was the highly lauded "Vault Roof House" (1959) on Scadlock Lane in Sherman Oaks. Undoubtedly influenced by the publication of Case Study House #20 (Saul Bass Residence) by Buff, Straub and Hensman in the January 1958 issue of *Arts and Architecture* which featured molded plywood vaults in its roof design, Dorman persuaded Steinkamp to let him design a home that emphasized this new roof form (see Figure 3:2). Dorman was mindful of the spec house serving a quasi-commercial function: "The roof form of this house was not chosen by whim but was, I believe, a successful experiment in a new residential silhouette, to avoid the mass-produced look-alike row upon row of homes."[44]

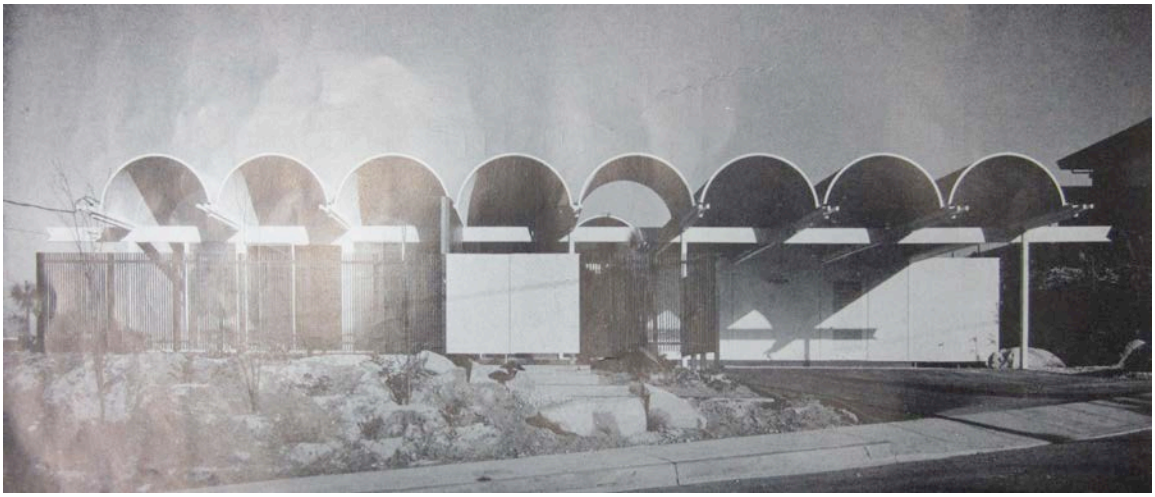


Figure 3:2 "Vault-Roof House" (1959) in Sherman Oaks designed on spec for Elwain Steinkamp took Case Study House #20 a step further in structural innovation and design. "House by Richard L. Dorman and Associates," *Arts and Architecture*, April 1960, page 26. Photo by Marvin Rand. Used with permission courtesy of the Estate of Marvin Rand.

Unlike Case Study House #20 which used the pre-fabricated molded plywood "vaults" to span between the structural beams, Dorman engineered "true vaulted form(s) with the vaults acting in both directions…"[45] Such a design had previously only been used in commercial/industrial architecture. The rare exception to that rule was architect Paul Rudolph's house for Mary Hook (1951-1952) near Sarasota, Florida.[46] Dorman's design for Steinkamp unquestionably added cost and aggravation to the project. Dorman had also previously used a series of barrel vaulted roof forms in his design for the pool cabanas at the Habana Hilton (see Figure 3:3) and this cross-pollination of ideas between commercial and residential projects would become a recurring theme in Dorman's work.

Figure 3:3 Habana Hilton (1958) was a Dorman project while he worked in the offices of Welton Becket and Associates. Note vault-roofed pool cabanas. Photographer unknown. Image from the Bruce Becket and Associates, Welton Becket archives, as depicted in Peter Moruzzi's book *Havana Before Castro*, 219. Permission pending.

In addition to being a powerful element of structural expression, the barrel-roof volumes in the Steinkamp spec house added drama to the interior spaces and allowed light penetration through the opaque western façade as well as expanded views of the sky on the glass dominant eastern elevation. As a result, the house won national acclaim with a *House and Home* Home for Better Living Award in 1960, an AIA-*Sunset* Western Home Award of Merit in 1961, and was recognized by the New York Architectural League with Honorable Mention at the National Gold Medal Exhibition "Building Arts in the Past Five Years" in 1961. The house was also featured in the *New York Times*.[47]

The expressive vaults of this speculative house stand in marked contrast to a custom house Dorman designed with Dan Morganelli,[48] the Lakenan Residence (1955). This house offered an avant-garde post-and-beam aesthetic with a distinctive Japanese influence (see Figure 3:4).

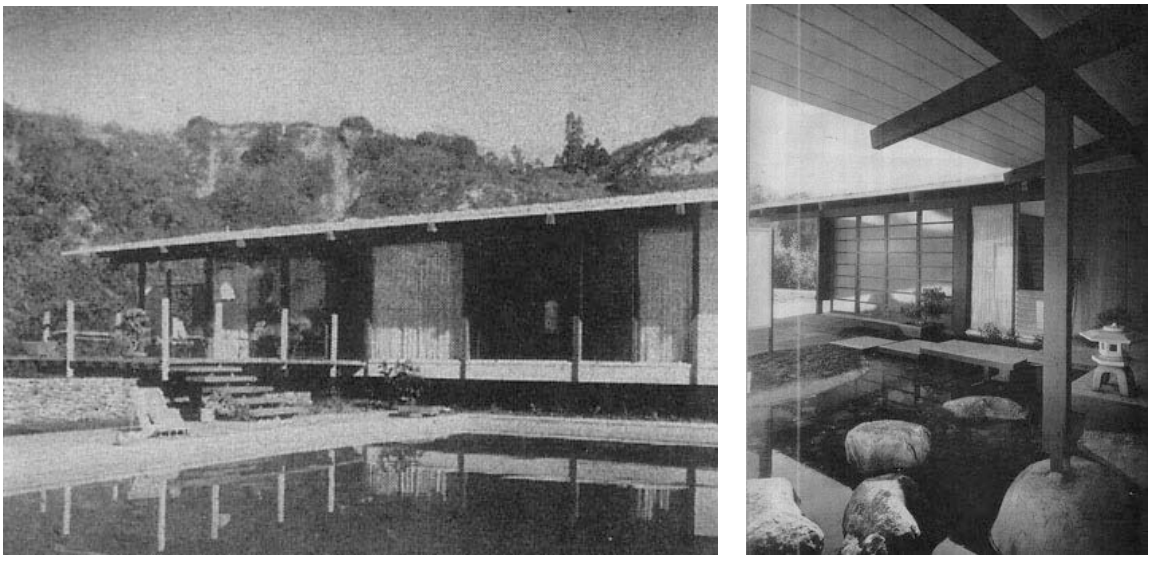


Figure 3:4 Lakenan Residence (1955) in Beverly Hills designed by Richard Dorman and Dan Morganelli. Image at left shows restrained avant-garde modern aesthetic used in this custom house design. Image at right shows expensive detailing of post and rock. Photos by Maurice Erlich. "Japanese Tradition Is Shaping A New American House," *House and Home*, October 1956, 204-5. Permission pending.

The plywood barrel vault would later make its way into at least one custom-designed residence, the David Leavitt House (1961) as well as Dorman's design for the demountable pavilion for the Trade Fair Program of the Department of Commerce (1962).[49]

As a developer, Steinkamp also appreciated Dorman's interest in efficiency. Taking cues from former instructor Cal Straub (who was a strong advocate for the efficiency found in the module), Dorman employed the seven-foot module in his residential, commercial and industrial projects. As the module for his post-and beam

construction, it allowed for open plans, rigor in design, powerful expression of structure and a luxurious scale. All of these elements are to be found in the Vault-Roof House which like Lakenan Residence (1955), Briggs Residence (1957), and another speculative house later known as the Glazier Residence (1960) used the seven-foot module.

Philosophically, efficiency was somewhat of a preoccupation for the architect. The closest thing to a manifesto by Dorman is his article entitled "Social Value Seen For Office Building," which was picked up by the Associated Press wire and published in a variety of paper across the country. In it, Dorman forecasts changing work patterns including the four-day work-week and ten-hour day. He observes that the average office building is currently unoccupied 48 hours per week (a weekend) and predicts that will increase to as much as 72 hours. Dorman, therefore, suggested "…builders incorporate into business buildings those facilities which can be used by the community during non-business hours."[50] Suggestions included school facilities or outdoor areas that could be leased to government agencies for education, recreation or community activities. In Dorman's words, "This would defray the cost of the building operation and benefit the community in that local government would not have to build these special buildings with tax funds."[51] Two years prior, Dorman described a similar efficiency-oriented approach to his work for the "Seven-Day-A-Week-Church." Here he lamented "the considerable economic waste in that the plant [church] stood idle most of the week."[52] Comments like these indicate Dorman not only spoke the language of developers, but applied the concepts to his non-developer projects.

In addition to his speculative housing projects, within six months of establishing his own practice, Dorman established a working relationship with John M. Stahl—one of

the most important and successful industrial developers in Los Angeles.[53] Stahl was an early leader in the planning and development of industrial areas in Vernon, the city of Commerce, and Santa Monica. Stahl distinguished himself as one of the earliest proponents of large, planned, industrial development tracts that featured architecture and landscape architecture as a selling point. As a result, Stahl developed custom-designed office, manufacturing, and warehousing facilities for some of the nation's largest companies.

During the postwar period, growth-oriented companies required larger facilities, identified opportunities to consolidate dispersed operations under one roof, or needed to establish a West Coast presence in service to the rapidly growing California market. The concept of the industrial park can be traced back to the development of the Central Manufacturing District in Chicago in 1905[54] and the industrial belts east and south of Los Angeles were largely based upon this model. In Southern California, Stahl created facilities and engaged in long-term leases (20-30 years) for such companies as American Cynamid Co., Union Carbide Co., RCA Corporation, and American Viscose Corporation. Acquiring large tracts of land in the Central Manufacturing Districts (CMDs) of Commerce and Vernon, Stahl created industrial tracts that were known for their attractiveness, cohesion and amenities (such as railroad accessibility, financial services, and fine-dining restaurant facilities). In this sense, Stahl can be viewed as the "grandfather of the Southern California industrial park." As described in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1958:

> Industrial and various other structures built by Stahl have won wide recognition not only for their architectural attractiveness, but also for their landscaped settings. He has long been a strong advocate of attractive architecture for industrial buildings and the landscaping of their sites.[55]

By 1958, Stahl had completed construction projects valued at a total of $87 million and won numerous landscape merit awards from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.[56]

Stahl's belief in the value of architecture is evidenced by his financial patronage of the 1954 Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition at Hollyhock House, "60 Years of Living Architecture." Stahl's name joined a list of Southern California's best-known architects as a supporter of this program. Stahl's buildings were all designed with a modern aesthetic. The developer enjoyed a long collaboration with Jack H. MacDonald and Cejay Parsons, Associated Architects and Engineers. MacDonald also formed a separate company, Jack H. MacDonald Company, to act as builder. The Stahl team became known for tilt-slab construction industrial buildings with clean Mid-Century Modern facades that incorporated such unusual features as the integration of patios and outdoor spaces with executive offices, cafeteria facilities, etc. The buildings were also designed with generous landscaped setbacks from the street, creating a pleasant bucolic setting. Streets were designed off a traditional urban grid pattern and the plans evoked the application of the ideas of the Garden City movement[57] to an industrial setting. Although the buildings designed were unified in their Mid-Century Modern style, use of glass, stone and concrete, each building was "…to be studied independently of the others to avoid a monotony of design and to lend contrast to the development as a whole."[58] Stahl's interest in architecture's role in industrial development is also evidenced by his engagement of both Craig Ellwood and Victor Gruen and Associates for projects in the late 1950s.[59]

In mid- to late-1956, Richard Dorman was engaged by Stahl to remodel his combined offices with construction arm Jack H. MacDonald Company. The result was

an elegant tilt-slab concrete façade perforated with "6-inch round transite tubes" for texture and light and an elegant entry canopy.[60] Each office encircled a central patio, accessed by floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors. As such, the new Stahl offices represented the product: a uniquely California-style office environment which must have appeared both foreign and attractive to local companies in older facilities or East Coast firms in high-rise or factory settings.

Whether Stahl hired Dorman to supplement or replace his relationship with Cejay Parsons is unclear. However, Dorman immediately began designing for Stahl's CMDs and other properties. Between 1957-1961, Dorman designed over a dozen buildings for Stahl's corporate clients ranging in size from 20,000 to 150,000 square feet. Dorman also designed an unrealized $23.8 million 40-story "Freeway Center" Building at 3rd Street and Beaudry Street (circa 1957-1958) for Stahl.

Dorman's 1956-1957 design for American Chain & Cable Company, is an excellent example of his approach to industrial building design. Here Dorman articulated an elegant entrance with large fixed-plate glass windows, and a single fin-wall of concrete flanking an aluminum-framed door and entryway (see Figure 3:5). The result is a building of "ultramodern appearance" which appears to partially float above the site.[61] The design feels more commercial/retail than industrial and evokes memories of his work on Meier & Frank for Becket. A small grove of eucalyptus and boulders completed the landscape for the building. As with all of Stahl's projects, Jack H. MacDonald Company acted as engineer and contractor. Stahl's industrial project budgets averaged approximately $4 per square foot.[62] As with the merchant builders, cost efficiency was a key component of the product Stahl was selling.

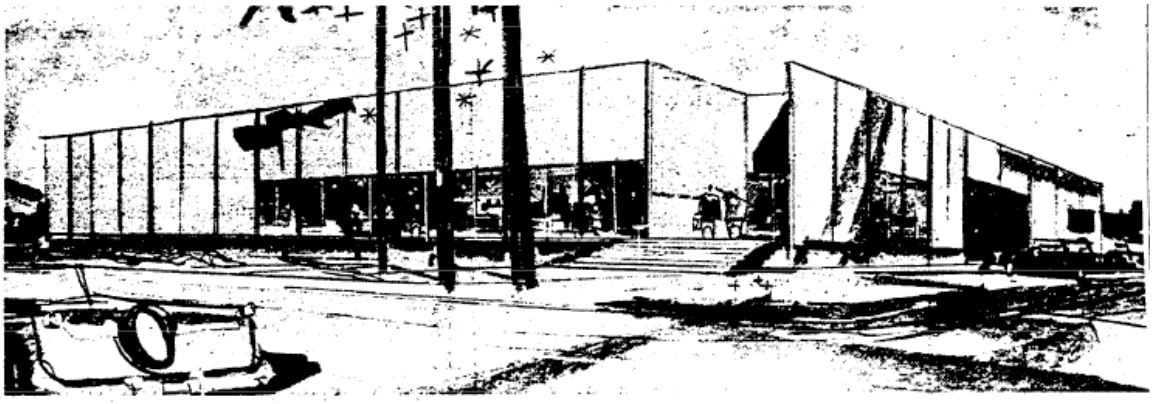


Figure 3:5 American Chain and Cable Company (1956-1957) for John M. Stahl. "New Buildings Readied in Big Development," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1957, H1. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

Whether in the design of speculative houses or industrial buildings, Dorman recognized that these developer-based projects were, in fact, products designed in part for their retail commercial ability to visually engage potential buyers of land, homes, or manufactured goods and services. Like Fickett, Dorman learned the language of developers: efficiency, marketing, and sales. Unlike Fickett, Dorman leveraged his early commercial and retail experience with Armet and Davis and Welton Becket. The result was an architectural language for tract home designs that bore little resemblance to his custom homes.

An Evolving Business Model

So facile was Dorman in his work with developers that by 1962 he took his knowledge and experience and formed Dorman Development. A separate company from his architectural practice, Dorman operated as developer-contractor. According to the Architectural Business column of *Architectural Record*, this was "…a sidelight he began in Los Angeles to keep control over his design of office buildings apartments and houses."[63] Among the properties he took an ownership role in was the United California

Bank (1974) in Hollywood. Dorman explained, "I own part of the building and I was able to persuade my partner and the bank to do something a little better than average. Since I was assuming part of the financial risk, they were more inclined to see my recommendations as practical."[64]

In retrospect, it can be said that Dorman modeled his practice on Welton Becket and Associates. It was a pragmatic approach to architecture with a high-design aesthetic. The firm that started out as Richard Dorman and Associates in 1956, began to grow in size and scope. In January 1963, Dion Neutra, son of the master architect, briefly joined Richard Dorman and Associates.[65] Dorman's pragmatic approach to the business appealed to the younger Neutra.[66]

Dorman's practice was given helpful publicity when the architect was featured on the September 1962 cover of *Life* magazine's issue on "The Take-Over Generation." The issue profiled a series of scientists, businessmen and artists (nearly all veterans) with a series of revealing subheads that identify their competitive spirit, rigorous work ethic, and urgency of accomplishment. These included, "I want to run so fast anything the Russians build will be obsolete," "Let the cream top out," "Responsibility makes us happy," and "I hate a lazy approach to anything." Regarding the arts, the magazine includes a profile of Richard Dorman under the subtitle, "I want to upgrade everything," accompanied by a picture of Dorman hanging from a construction crane. As the magazine describes, "at 39, he is president of two firms, winner of 10 national awards, has 56 projects in the works and swings wildly about on them during inspection trips."[67] Within three years, Dorman would bring that philosophy to the design of tract houses at Huntington Harbour in Huntington Beach, California.

Richard Dorman and Associates added master planning, urban, and civic design services in 1965. Then in August of 1967, the firm welcomed new partner, Harold F. "Peter" Munselle,[68] and renamed itself Dorman/Munselle Associates. A graduate from USC in 1953, Munselle had been affiliated with Edward H. Fickett, Charles Luckman and Associates, and Welton Becket and Associates prior to partnering with Dorman. During mid-1960s, Dorman became increasingly active in the Southern California Chapter of the AIA and was elected to its Board of Directors in 1967. In 1968, Dorman was elected to the College of Fellows by the AIA and recognized for his notable contribution in Design. In 1970, Dorman/Munselle even opened a Seattle office, but in 1971, Dorman/Munselle dissolved and the firm became Richard Dorman and Associates once again for the next five years.

Like Becket, Dorman intentionally restricted the number and type of custom home commissions he accepted. Dorman limited the number of houses to "no more than 15 houses a year," each with a budget of $10,000 or greater.[69] His preference was for the large "prestige" commissions upon which he built the economics and reputation of his practice. Among them, were Salton Bay Yacht Club (1961), Married Student Housing at the University of Southern California (1964-1965), Lake Arrowhead Country Club (1964), Playboy Office Building (1965), the Los Angeles Industrial Design Center (1965), Trade Fair Pavilion Prototype for International Trade Fair at Salonika, Greece, U.S. Department of Commerce (1962), Beverly Hills National Bank (1965), Malibu Methodist Church (1966) and many others. Dorman received commissions from institutions of higher learning such as USC, University of California, Irvine, Pepperdine University, and Cal State San Bernardino. In many of these larger and later commissions, Dorman continued

his early interest in expressing structure and making powerful architectural statements. In so doing, Dorman turned to glue-laminated beams and later a language of molded and sculpted concrete forms that indicated his increasing interest in non-orthogonal form but still made strong architectural statements about structure.

In 1976, Dorman lucratively merged with management consulting firm Theodore Barry & Associates (TB&A). What appears to be an odd mix today, is evidence of a widespread general business trend at the time towards mergers and conglomerates. According to Dorman who was interviewed by *Architectural Record* in 1979, "Melding the creativity of architects with business specialists…helps meet today's complexities in building."[70] Dorman also cited:

> Pressure is growing for better backup than the typical architectural firm can provide for many projects, we have to be responsible for more than ever before— from the site selection to engineering to design to building. And this route enables us to carry all those responsibilities in one tested firm.[71]

From the TB&A standpoint, their management consulting recommendations often included growth management and increasing efficiency — solutions for both of which often involved architectural outcomes. The merger enabled them to instantly offer high quality architectural and engineering services[72] to clients and keep the revenue stream in house. Dorman merged both his architectural practice and Dorman Development, Inc.

<u>The Efficiency of Commercial Development With the Scale and Materials of Home</u>

Based on the information currently available, the majority of Dorman's tract house projects were executed after 1960. Applying conventional wisdom, one would expect to see a strong association between these designs and Dorman's designs for custom and speculative houses. However, when comparing them in plan and in elevation, we see little kinship between these designs. One of Dorman's designs for the

1965 series of model homes in Huntington Harbour is an important example of how his commercial/retail projects continued to influence his residential development work of the 1960s. Finally, the concept will be expanded even further to demonstrate the cross-pollination between Dorman's commercial/industrial and his residential projects generally.

As tracts of flat open land for residential development became more difficult to locate, one developer, Christiana Oil Company, acquired a seaside marsh in Orange County, annexed it to Huntington Beach, and began dredging the land for the new $200 million marina-based development, Huntington Harbour. Huntington Harbour was envisioned as "a self-contained prestige community of more than 4,000 families."[73] The developers hired William L. Pereira and Associates to design a master plan consisting of nine islands and nine miles of canals. The master plan called for 433 acres of single-family residential, 76 acres of multi-family residential, 24 acres of beach/recreation, 30 acres for education and religious, and 78 acres for commercial development —the majority of which would be accessed by both car and boat.[74] Although the finished Huntington Harbour included only five islands and a landlocked tract of "Mainland Homes" homes, the developers placed continued emphasis on its architecture as a key selling point for buyers throughout its 15-year development.

The first phase of homes on Admiralty Island, was designed by Ladd and Kelsey, William F. Cody, and the Orange County-based firm of Smith and Kennedy. Despite a variety of available models (e.g., "Rustic Mexican," "Contemporary," "Bermuda"), they were all decidedly Mid-Century Modern in design and plan and opened for sale on August 18, 1962.[75] Within three months, all 190 units on Admiralty Island had sold and

developers rushed to speed dredging and development of the next phases.[76] For the 1965 Series of model homes, Huntington Harbour Corporation contracted with Richard Dorman and Associates to design at least two models for the development. Of the two designs, one gabled and one flat-roofed, Dorman's two-story flat roofed model (see Figure 3:6) received a *House and Home* Homes for Better Living Award in 1966. Dorman became the first architect in Huntington Harbour history to have *his name* featured in the development's extensive advertising campaign when the model was described as "a truly unique design by internationally known architect, Richard Dorman."[77] Rapid sales rates for this model were also cited as evidence of its success.[78]

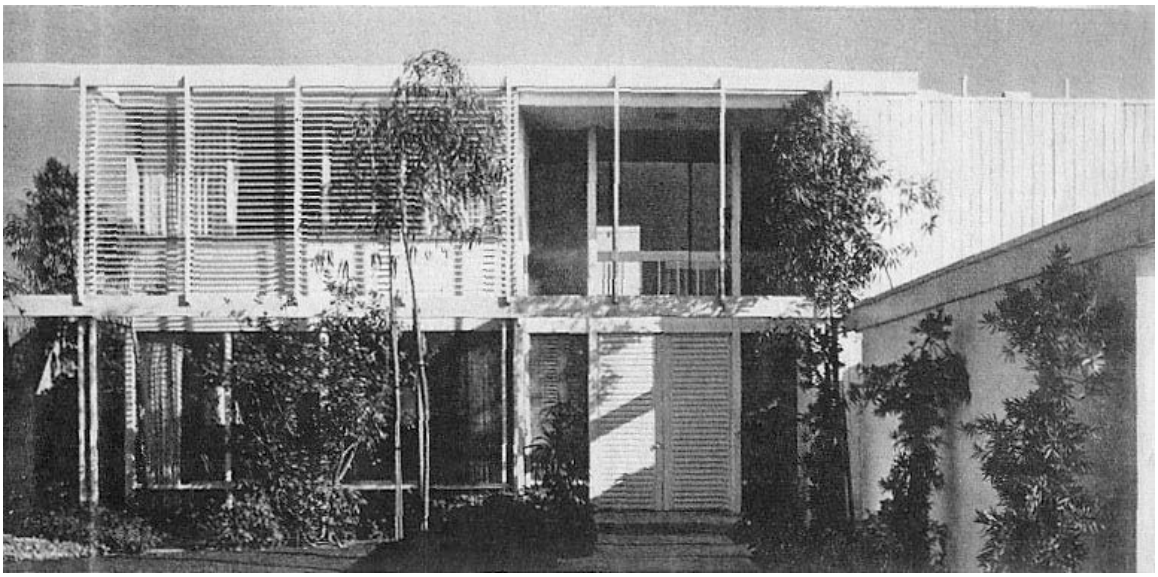


Figure 3:6 Richard Dorman's two-story flat-roofed model home for the 1965 Series at Huntington Harbour featured simple, rectangular form with central sculptural stairway visible through large panes of glass. Wooden lattice screens provide shade and privacy on front elevation. Photo by Richard Gross. "A Two-Story Contemporary That Stresses Openness," *House and Home*, March 1966, 106. Permission pending.

The merits of the Huntington Harbour model home, as described in *House and Home* included, "It is wide open to the outdoors…yet it is no fishbowl."[79] The house was similarly lauded for its "most untraditional spaciousness" in a "well-executed version of

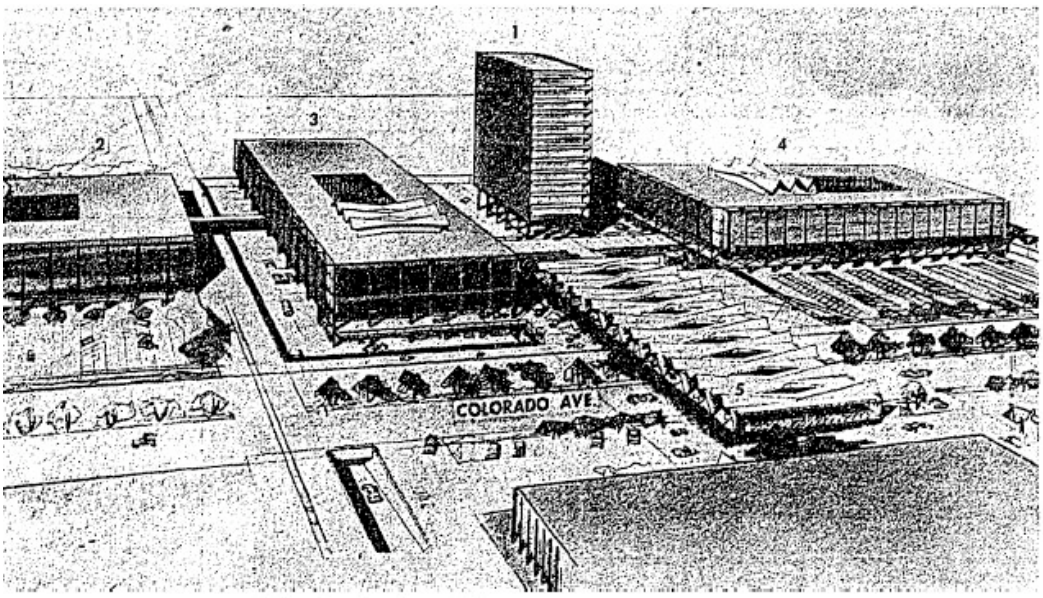
the two-story rectangle."[80] Dorman's two models were another contribution to the growing architectural significance of the Huntington Harbour development. It is estimated that approximately 30-40 of each of the two Dorman models were constructed and sold in this phase of development.[81] Virtually all of them have been remodeled beyond recognition (see Figure 3:7).

Figure 3:7 Dorman's flat-roofed modern tract home from the Huntington Harbour 1965 Series with significant alterations, including second story garage addition, altered wooden screen fenestration and entry wall. Most all other models constructed have been razed or remodeled beyond recognition. Photo by the author.

The two-story flat-roofed Dorman model was successful despite a number of challenges. First, many of the parcels in this phase of Huntington Harbour development were smaller that those previously developed. Dorman's plan was designed for a 60'x 100' wide lot. However, the Huntington Harbour Corporation was attempting to maximize the number of saleable parcels, and as a result, there were more parcels of less than 60' wide in this phase of the subdivision than in previous phases.[82] Secondly, buyers were demanding larger houses with more rooms. The 1965 model in question consisted of four bedrooms vs. the three bedrooms found in the original 1962 models on Admiralty Island. The 2,700 square foot Dorman design, therefore, necessitated two stories. All of the model homes from the first phase of development had been single story. Lastly, in an attempt to provide buyers with product at different price points, Huntington Harbour developed both "canal" and "mainland" (a.k.a. landlocked) parcels. Available models were the same for both lot type. Therefore, Dorman, like the other architects of this phase, needed to design a house that would effectively have *two front elevations*: one approached by automobile and one approached by boat. Huntington Harbour actively marketed their canal-front living as a new, yet natural, evolution of the famous California lifestyle.

Weather he was cognizant of it or not, Dorman had faced a similar challenge five years earlier in the Ivory Tower Restaurant (1960) for John M. Stahl. By 1956, Dorman had become lead architect for Stahl's new Electronics Center development in Santa Monica. It was located on an irregularly shaped area bordered by Olympic Blvd, Colorado Avenue, Cloverfield Avenue, 26th Street and an access road parallel to Olympic Blvd. Conceived as an electronics center of government interest, it was described as "…symbolizing Southern California's amazingly swift rise to world

greatness as an electronics research and production region."[83] To populate it, Stahl lured Rand Corporation, which built three buildings there (a computer building, a research building, and the Rand System Development Division) and Paper Mate Manufacturing. In 1956-1957, Dorman designed all of these buildings and a seven-story parking garage. Overall, the complex employed over 4,500 workers — 800 of whom were relocated with their belongings by Rand on a series of special trains from Chicago.[84] The Rand Systems Development Building was published in the December 1958 issue of *Arts & Architecture*.[85] Stahl later purchased the parcel north of the site on Colorado for an expansion of the complex. Dorman's unbuilt 1958 design for the expansion featured four identical research buildings, a twelve-story office tower, and a one-story retail bridge spanning Colorado Avenue with a roofline of dynamic folded-planes (see Figure 3:8).[86]



MAJOR PROJECT'S PATTERN—Indicated in this drawing is the composition of proposed $38,000,000 Electronics Center announced for development on 30-acre site at Colorado Ave. and Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, by John M. Stahl, prominent developer of industrial and other properties. Identified on picture are: (1) 12-story Tower Building to house offices of research companies; (2, 3 and 4) identical four-story research buildings; (5) one-story mall-type building to span Colorado Ave. to connect the new project with multi-million-dollar five-building development by Stahl on 38-acre site, also situated in Santa Monica, that was completed last year.

Figure 3:8 Richard Dorman's design for the expansion of the Stahl Electronics Center in Santa Monica. Note folded plane roof on all commercial structures in the development. "New $38 million Program Slated," *Los Angeles Times*, November 2, 1958, G1. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

In 1959-1960, Stahl commissioned Dorman to design a large restaurant facility for the complex to serve the significant daytime population of moneyed executives. The two-story Ivory Tower Restaurant seated 350 diners in four dining rooms — each of which featured a specific art exhibit in the Pre-Columbian, Avant-Garde, Renaissance, or Traditional dining rooms. A large cocktail lounge on the first floor was visible from the mezzanine of the second floor dining rooms.

Rectangular in plan, the two-story restaurant was of wood frame construction using large glue-laminated beams. Clad in vertically laid redwood siding and smooth finished pine, it featured large, double-high windows flanked by blue glass strips through which a steel staircase was visible as a dynamic sculptural element against a gold plaster interior wall. The distinctive, folded plane roofline of the restaurant would have been consistent with the retail development planned for the expansion north of Colorado Avenue. The Ivory Tower design contrasted a restrained, yet elegant exterior with dynamic interior spaces with sophisticated furnishings. Dorman's design for the building was published in *Architectural Record* and *House and Home* and received an AIA Southern California Chapter Award in 1960, a National AIA Merit award in 1961, and an Institutions' Interiors Award in 1962. The publication of the Ivory Tower was a contributing factor in Esther McCoy's decision to feature Richard Dorman in her article for *Zodiac* magazine, "Young Architects in the United States." In it, McCoy lauded Dorman for his interest in "enclosing space plastically" and placed him in the company of such national up-and-coming talent as Victor Lundy, Ulrich Franzen, Paolo Soleri, Ray Kappe, and Peter Blake.

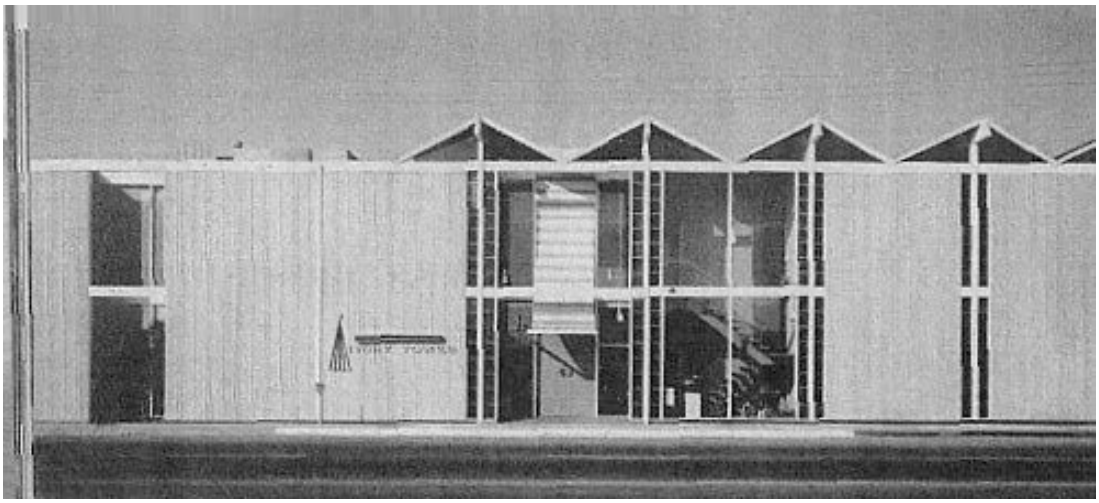


Figure 3:9 Ivory Tower Restaurant (1960) in the original Stahl Electronics Center in Santa Monica. "Restaurant With Art Display," *Architectural Record*, July, 1961, page 155. Photo by Larry Frost. Permission pending.

Like at Huntington Harbour, the Ivory Tower Restaurant parcel was a long narrow site. The operator had requested a minimum of 10,000 square feet of dining space in order to turn a profit.[87] Dorman's solution was a narrow rectangular plan, zones of which were bisected by a sculptural staircase, visible from the street through large expanses of glass (see Figures 3:9 and 3:10). This same plan is used in Dorman's flat-roofed two-story model for Huntington Harbour. The rectangular plan allowed Dorman to maximize square footage and the sculptural staircase element served to both delineate public and private zones and provide a dynamic element to the otherwise restrained facade (see Figure 3:11). Clad in stained vertical redwood siding and painted stucco, the Ivory Tower even shared common materials with the Huntington Harbour design.

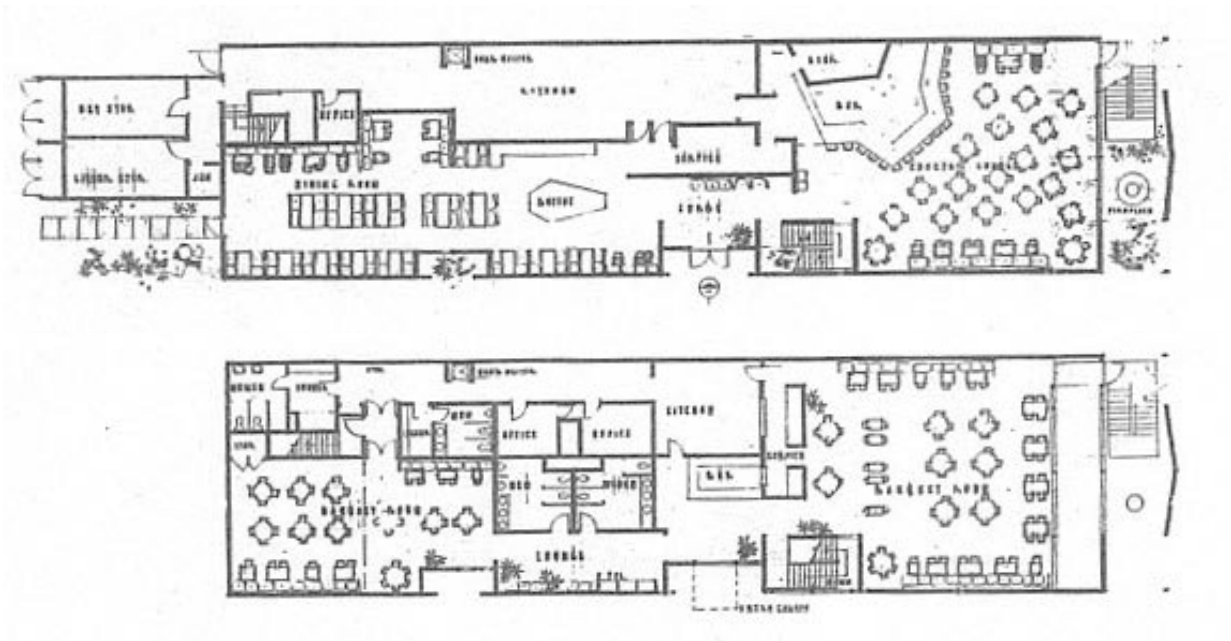


Figure 3:10 Rectangular plan for Ivory Tower Restaurant features central stair, mezzanine level, and maximizes usage of its 10,000 square feet. "Restaurant With Art Display," *Architectural Record*, July, 1961, 155. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

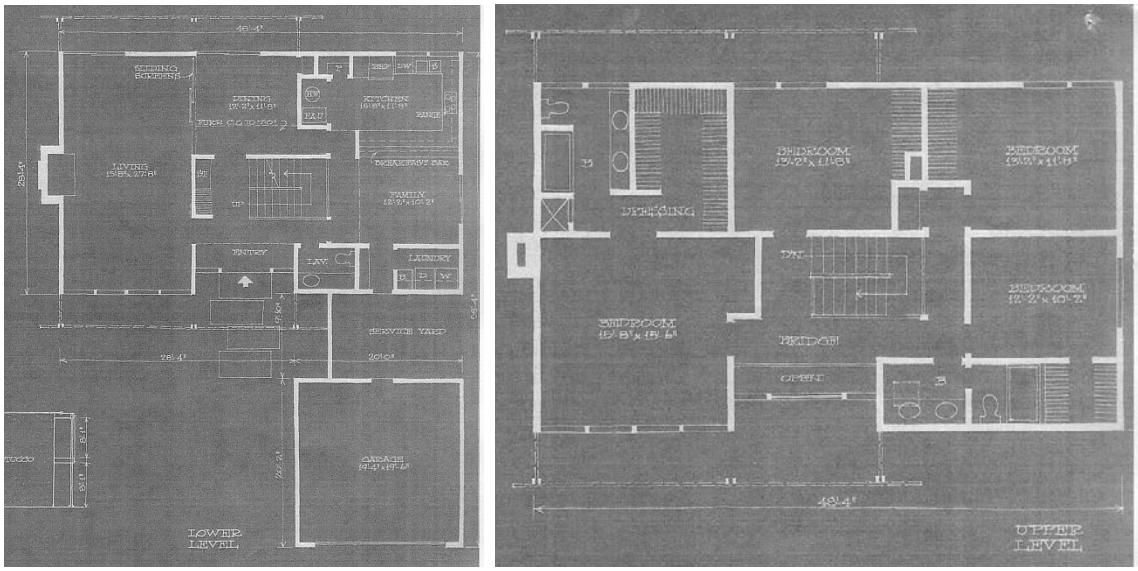


Figure 3:11 Plan for flat-roofed model home in Huntington Harbour (1965) by Richard Dorman features rectangular design with central stairway. Detached garage also creates negative space for utility yard. "A Two-Story Contemporary That Stresses Openness," *House and Home*, March 1966, 107. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

The plan for the Huntington Harbour tract house, however, stands in marked contrast to the typical plans for Dorman's speculative houses and custom houses. In Dorman's custom home designs of the 1950s and 1960s, the architect showed a distinct preference for breaking the plan into a series of functional pavilions for living. Dorman's interest in breaking apart the functional pavilions appeared early in his residential work with Welton Becket and permeated the custom home designs of his own practice.

While in Becket's office, Dorman was assigned the rare residential commission, the McCulloch Residence (1955) in Rancho Mirage. The project was a desert home for Robert McCulloch, the founder and President of McCulloch Motors, an early manufacturer of power tools. With a budget of $750,000 to design and build the house, McCulloch, a multi-millionaire, sought a home that "would knock his friends' eyes out and provide his family and himself with a life of effortless comfort."[88] The latter was achieved by mechanizing virtually everything in the house: from "telemusic" system to mechanical beds, to the automatic whiskey dispenser, to a human "Lazy Susan" that ensured sunbathers tanned evenly. The later was featured on the May 7, 1956 cover of *Life* magazine. The house took four years to plan and build. Dorman worked on the design of the McCulloch Residence. It is his first known residential design to have been built.

In the plan of the McCulloch Residence, Dorman created a compound of structures divided by functionality (see Figure 3:12). The children's rooms, identified on the plan as "men's dorm" and "women's dorm" are completely freestanding from the main house, as are the pool cabanas and carport. The house was L-shaped in plan, but

strongly divides the spaces between the public entertaining zone and the private master bedroom suite. The house was post-and-beam construction and the aesthetics of this are fully expressed in the design: with walls of glass, terrazzo floors and an interior featuring a series of rare woods. The plan configuration allowed for maximum access to a series of outdoor spaces including wading pools, a putting green and a swimming pool. A long, low-pitched gabled roof provided wide shaded eaves for each of the living pavilions. The project's enormous budget and parcel size allowed Dorman the freedom to disconnect living spaces into functional pavilions— a signature element of his custom residential designs throughout his career.

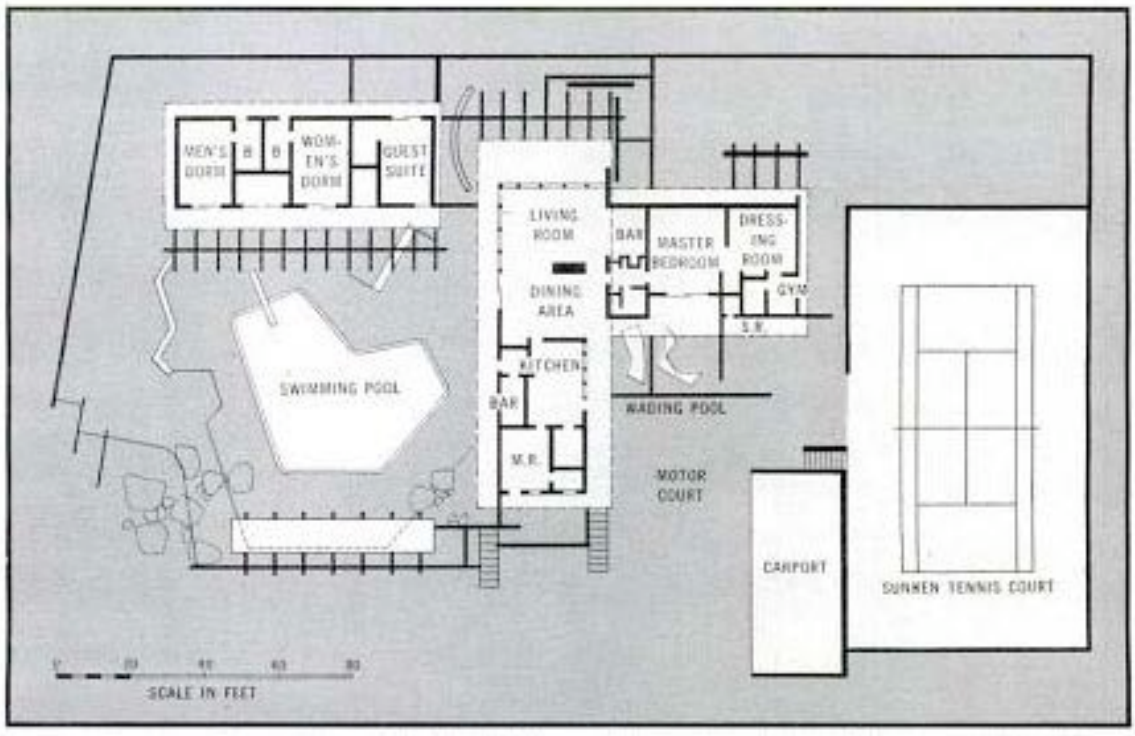


Figure 3:12 While at Welton Becket and Associates, Dorman designed the McCulloch Residence (1955) in Rancho Mirage. The $750,000 commission featured a compound of functional pavilions. *Life*, May 7, 1956, 71. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

Dorman was fundamentally interested in the function of each space. "I personally think of a building as a setting for various specialized activities," he said when interviewed, "…the visual-kinetic atmosphere to me is uppermost in arranging space and choosing color and texture. Play of light and shadow and the intertwining of textureism (sic) can be visually exciting."[89] Whether in his designs for houses where he breaks down the plan into zones/rooms of individual private or public functions or for office buildings where he designs a compound of small structures, *each space is assigned a function*. In plan, these functional spaces are treated like individual pavilions that can be tangentially placed touching one another or liberated completely as individual buildings.

Dorman's experiments with clusters of dynamic pavilions achieve maturity in the early 1960s with the Stanley Siegel Residence (1960) and the Harry Mullikin Residence (1964) (see Figures 3:13 and 3:14). Dorman's decision to pull the rooms of a house apart into transparent pavilions (almost independent of one another) is largely governed by budget. According to *Sunset* magazine, "A four-part multiple [pavilion] house has about twice as much exterior side wall as a squarish (sic) house of equivalent size."[90] Therefore, the less interconnected rooms are in plan, the more exterior wall surface and construction costs are incurred. Roof overhangs for pavilion houses also increase cost. As such, these types of experiments were not feasible in developer work for speculative or tract housing.

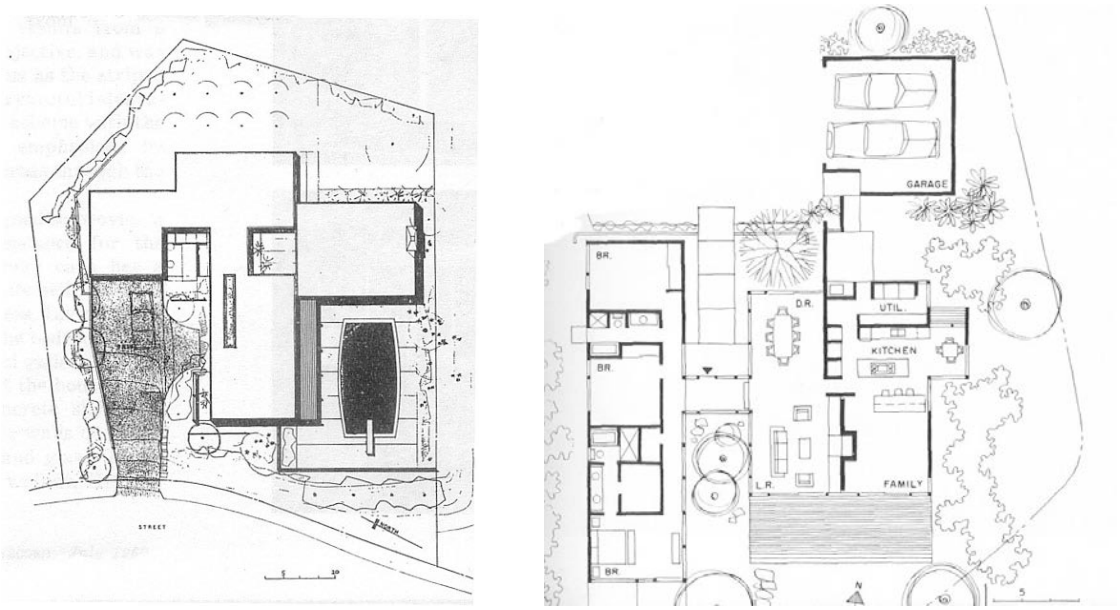


Figure 3:13 At left, Siegel Residence Plan (1961) with tangentially attached pavilions as printed in *Architectural Record*, July 1940, page 137. At right, the Mullikin Residence (1964) with almost completely detached pavilions as featured in *Houses of the West*: *An Architectural Record Book*, 80. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

Figure 3:14 Mullikin Residence (1964) features the post-and-beam aesthetic. The house is currently in disrepair with its vast expanses of glass covered by cardboard. Photo by the author.

Dorman applied the pavilion approach to commissions that involved the creation of clusters of buildings such as Park Plaza Lodge (1959) and USC Married Student Housing (1964-1965). The latter was a series of three buildings, each one identified with a specific family type and program (i.e., married without children/studio vs. married with children/two-bedroom). Each building was visually distinctive in its design and together they defined spaces for privacy or harmonious interaction. "Instead of building a massive building of concrete and steel and injecting 157 units into it," Dorman explained, "we have attempted to establish a small village to give young married students an effective atmosphere of peace and quiet."[91]

Dorman combined the isolation of rooms/functions in discrete pavilions with transparency and opacity in materials, and the placement of each pavilion in plan to create "negative spaces." These "negative spaces" become patios or other exterior spaces. In a 1959 *Los Angeles Times* article entitled "This is My Best: Living in a Garden," Dorman notes how "the house has seven distinct garden areas."[92] By 1960, even the garden areas have been assigned functions as he distinguishes the "active garden" from the "morning garden" in another design.[93] By staggering transparent pavilions and negative spaces, Dorman also created opportunities for extended views on the diagonal and the penetration of natural light from multiple directions. Dorman explained:

> I like to effect an intimate integration of garden and interior. If a plan in its early stages doesn't have this close in-and-out relationship, I keep working on it until it does. Why is this so important? For one thing, it is a satisfying experience to live in a house that is well related to the garden. It is bright and spacious. If well planned, it means you can sit by the fire at night and watch the stars at the same time.[94]

Over time, Dorman's dynamic interplay between pavilions and negative space moved from plan to section. This coincided with the encounter of more "unbuildable" hillside parcels that lacked large flat pads for building. Dorman's design for the Seidenbaum Residence (1966) for *Los Angeles Times* architecture writer Art Seidenbaum is an early example of this three-dimensional dynamism (see Figures 3:15 and 3:16). According to Dorman, the house was "…basically four platforms" with "pods" — the center two of which were "connected on the same level, while the other two at either end are lower and slightly staggered back from the center."[95] Each one of these pods has a separate function (studio, living room, family room and bedrooms). The play of pavilions in section is again advanced in 1971 with the design of Dorman's own house in Benedict Canyon. With scarcely twenty feet of buildable land beside the street, Dorman created "…a foundation of five concrete boxes. On them, he balanced and cantilevered the various living areas, the modules, and then tilted the rooflines up or down so that some modules peer off to the hilltops while others aim at the canyon floor."[96] As Dorman described, "Each module is 10 feet high and 14 feet wide but differs from its neighbors in its tilt and length — characteristics that are determined by the function of the module."[97]

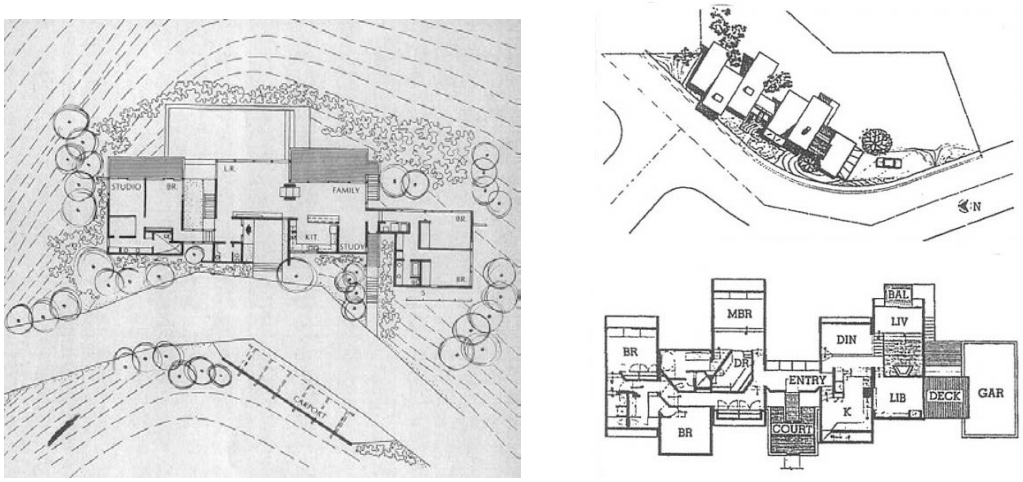


Figure 3:15 At left, Seidenbaum Residence Plan (1966) featuring two center pods on same level in *Architectural Record* Houses of 1967, page 87. At right, the Dorman Residence (1971) with seven different pods angled for views as featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1971, Q12. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

Figure 3:16 Seidenbaum Residence (1966) featuring bedroom pavilion as photographed from living pavilion. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10)

Finally, it is useful to compare Dorman's design for the Huntington Harbour home with a speculative house (1960) he designed for builder Stanley Martson in Encino, California. Another winner of a *House and Home* "Homes for Better Living Award" for Dorman that year, the Martson house (also known as the Grimes Residence) was a 2,200 square-foot two-story home on a sloping hillside lot with carport parking underneath. At a price of $39,750 (including a $11,750 lot), the budget was $12.70 per square foot — twenty percent more than its Huntington Harbour counterpart. Although the sites are quite different, in the Martson speculative house once again finds Dorman using an economical two-story box plan with central open staircase for circulation and light. With a site that naturally afforded more privacy, Dorman was free to open up the house to glass on all four sides, and he made exceptional use of a double-high glass elevation on the north side which feeds light into an open mezzanine space a the top of the stairs to be used as a playroom or office (see Figure 3:17 and 3:18). The incorporation of a mezzanine floor was a common characteristic of Dorman's commercial projects and featured prominently in his design for an office building in Manila, Philippines published in *Arts and Architecture* in July 1959 as well as a key feature in the Ivory Tower Restaurant design of the following year.

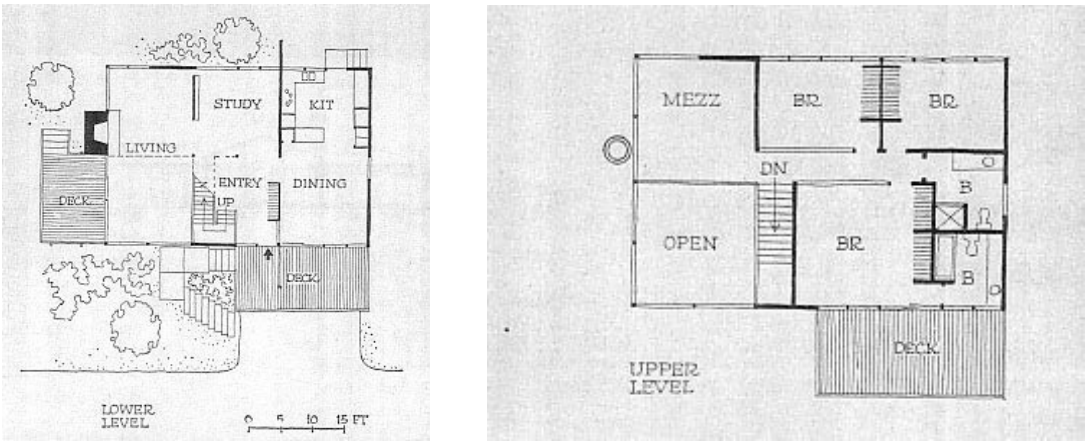


Figure 3:17 Plan for the Martson Speculative House (1960) *House and Home*, October 1966, 89. The economical two-story box plan features central stair and mezzanine. Used with permission of the heirs of Richard L. Dorman.

Figure 3:18 The Martson Speculative House (1960) as it appeared in 2010. Photo by the author.

Another example of the ongoing dialogue between Dorman's commercial and residential work can be found in the architect's 1962 design for Protective Security Life Insurance Building near Beverly Hills (see Figure 3:19). Here Dorman designed another restrained two-story box for a fifty-foot wide lot using aluminum screens to control light and provide privacy. The staircase, externalized this time to provide circulation to a variety of companies (including his own offices), was again a focal point for light, circulation, and a visual complement to the rigorous lines of the building. Therefore, Dorman used the lessons learned in good design and efficiency from these industrial and commercial buildings to inform his design for the Huntington Harbour model home — with the scale and materials adjusted to match the residential nature of the project. Articulated wooden screens provide light *and* privacy to the model home on the street elevation. The rear canal elevation was open to water views or the landscaped rear yard. The interior utilized a free plan for openness and spaciousness. All of this was achieved at a construction cost of $10.70 per square foot for the model home.[98]

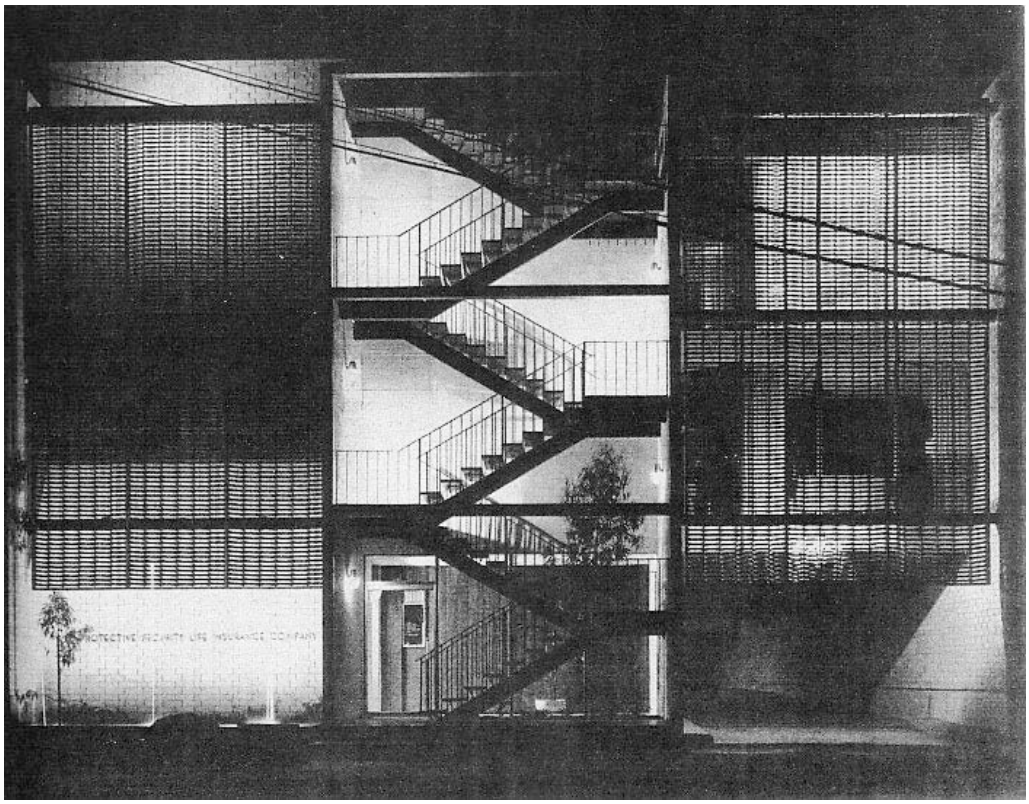


Figure 3:19 Insurance Company Building (1962) that also housed Richard Dorman's architectural offices features central stair as dynamic sculptural element to orthogonal forms. "Narrow Lot and Parking Needs Determine Plan" *Architectural Record*, September 1962, 163. Photo by Larry Frost. Permission pending.

The cross-pollination between Dorman's commercial and residential work was also in evidence with the adaptation of the playful, folded-plane roof of the Ivory Tower Restaurant for the concurrently designed Joseph Beber Residence (1960) in Beverly Hills (see Figure 3:20). Almost simultaneously, Dorman used the folded-plane roofline again, this time for the public spaces of the Fly-In Hotel, a Hyatt Hotel (1960-1961) at Seattle-Tacoma Airport (see Figure 3:21).

Figure 3:20 Beber Residence (1960) by Dorman. This custom home featured a folded-plane roof like the Ivory Tower Restaurant, but maintained a pavilion plan. Carport, living and bedroom pavilions are united by series of interior courtyards. Photo by the author.

Figure 3:21 Fly-In Hotel, a Hyatt Hotel (1960-1961) at Seattle-Tacoma Airport. http://www.vintageseattle.org/2009/050. Permission pending.

In the early 1960s, noted developer Paul W. Trousdale began the development of his new hillside subdivision, Trousdale Estates in Beverly Hills. Another combination of speculative houses and the sale of lots for custom home development, the Beber Residence was among the earliest residences designed and built in the subdivision. Whether or not it was originally conceived by Dorman as a speculative house is currently unknown. However, in 1965 Trousdale did assemble a group of some of the most talented architects in Los Angeles to design and build a cluster of speculative homes open for viewing. Advertised as the "Trousdale Quintet," they consisted of Dorman, A. Quincy Jones, Edward H. Fickett, William Stephenson and Rex Lotery and the ad featured the architects playing T-squares like jazz instruments (see Figure 3:22).[99]

Figure 3:22 Ad for Trousdale Estates featuring left to right, Rex Lotery, Richard Dorman, William Stephenson, Edward Fickett, and A. Quincy Jones. "Display Ad 42," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1965, D4. Permission pending.

Like all architects who worked with developers during this period, Dorman also was commissioned to design apartments, semi-attached residences intended for sale as condominiums or cooperatives, and develop master plans. In the Palm Springs area, Dorman designed and won a 1965 *House and Home* Homes for Better Living Award of Merit for his merchant-built house for Southland developer Fillmore Crank. After receiving the award, Crank engaged Dorman on at least two more projects: La Colina (1966), a cluster of condominiums in Thousand Oaks, and the Rio Vista Apartment Project (1968) in Universal City. In 1969, Dorman completed three apartment buildings in Orange County for the developer William Lyon totaling 960 units.[100] Following trends wherein master planning activities were more in demand and in sync with his philosophy of total design, Dorman seized the opportunity to provide preliminary planning exercises for several projects including Harlan Lee's Albertson Ranch near Thousand Oaks.[101]

By this time, popular taste had tired of the avant-garde modern aesthetic that Dorman loved so much and California's Title 24 Energy Efficiency Standards made building with large expanses of glass nearly impossible. Over a period of months in the mid-1970s, Dorman permanently relocated to Santa Fe, New Mexico where he dabbled in architecture but effectively retired from practice building. In 1996, Dorman merged his small practice with Larry Breen to become Dorman and Breen of Albuquerque. Mostly, Dorman devoted these later years to writing and publishing on narrow-gauge railroads.

It can be seen that there is a substantive architectural dialogue between Dorman's industrial/commercial and residential work for developers. Dorman was

facile in speaking the language of developers and applying the concepts to a variety of projects. In fact, he himself dabbled in commercial development under the auspices of retaining greater creative control over designs.

The common theme of efficiency often drove Dorman to adapt lessons learned from successful industrial or commercial commissions as solutions to similar problems in residential development. Dorman's speculative and tract houses are not merely rudimentary versions of his custom homes. In fact, beyond materials and the aesthetic considerations of space, transparency and light, they share little in common with the dynamic pavilion plans of the custom residences. But, when called upon by enlightened developers like Elwain Steinkamp or John M. Stahl, Dorman could elevate the spec house and vernacular industrial form through the use of innovative materials and the creation of negative "open spaces" that enhanced quality of life.

A Final Word on Richard Dorman

Dorman was a modern architect who was at his best pushing design and technology to their fullest potential. His residential work bears the influence of his training with Cal Straub and other teaching influences at USC. He fully embraced the post-and-beam aesthetic and its relationship with nature by creating buildings that lay claim to outdoor spaces as easily as the spaces enclosed by walls. That dynamic dialogue was subservient to efficiency for Dorman, unless forced by financial circumstance or program to limit it. Even still, his industrial, commercial and office buildings are distinguished by it and his plans for larger commissions and campuses combine functional utility and beauty in their use of these negative spaces.

While nearly perfecting the modern pavilion in plan and section, residential architecture was insufficient to build a practice of the scope and stature he envisioned. His fearlessness, confidence and charisma served him well during wartime and Dorman applied those same qualities to his career. His early years at Welton Becket and Associates refined his design skills, provided valuable experience designing and building large commissions, and established a network of invaluable business contacts that he would expand and leverage throughout his career.

Unlike Becket, however, Dorman had a clear aesthetic vision for his practice. Dorman's architecture makes a strong statement about the structure (either via post-and-beam or pre-cast concrete forms) and his repeated use of the seven-foot module creates modern spaces (residential or commercial) that are anything but humble. Dorman inherits his USC mentor Cal Straub's love of the module and its rigorous application, but a Dorman building carries with it an unbridled confidence reflective of the upwardly mobile postwar period in which it was created. Partially a reflection of the generous seven-foot module and partially Dorman's facile design sensibility, his buildings can be so smooth in manners that historians and critics overlook and/or dismiss them.

As careful examination of Dorman's work has shown, there was more cross-pollination of ideas between his commercial work and his tract work, than from his custom home designs. The boundaries of this type of commercial and efficient residential projects were chiefly demarcated by materials; a residential vs. commercial palette. And yet with the opportunities provided by a few enlightened merchant builders like Elwain Steinkamp, Dorman managed to innovate in speculative house

commissions and bring an eye-catching commercial sensibility to these works appropriate for the couple paging through the *Los Angeles Times* Home Section or taking a weekend drive to visit the newest subdivision.

Dorman's legacy has not been well-served by the sheer volume of his work nor his decision to sell the practice to a business consultant and retire on the proceeds leaving no paper trail for historians to follow. However, this is just another example of the pragmatic approach of the architects of this period. Dorman was part of the take-over generation; he came, he saw, he conquered. He was, in effect, just doing his job.

[1] The Take-Over Generation," *Life*, September 14, 1962, 40.

[2] Because no archives survive, the number of Dorman projects is based on a reconstructed project list from media coverage, recent real estate transactions, and word of mouth verified by permit research. As such, the list is inherently incomplete.

[3] Grant Dorman, telephone interview by author, February 25, 2011.

[4] 1910 United States, Federal Census, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed March 14, 2010).

[5] *Los Angeles City Directory, 1915* (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Directory Company, 1915), 728.

[6] http://www.thefreelibrary.com/FUNERAL +SERVICES+AND+MEMORIALS.-a0224453884 (accessed May 24, 2011).

[7] Grant Dorman, telephone interview by author, February 25, 2011.

[8] "Mission No. 13 Proves Lucky for Two Officers," *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1944, 12, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[9] Ibid.

[10] Major Arthur Gordon, "The House I Left Behind Me," *House Beautiful*, January 1945, 44.

[11] Office Of Records and Transcripts, University of Illinois, email message to author, April 28, 2011.

[12] Grant Dorman, telephone interview by author, February 25, 2011.

[13] Deborah Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program: The USC Experiment in Architectural Pedagogy, 1930 to 1960" (MHP Thesis, University of Southern California, 2010), x.

[14] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 201.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 86.

[17] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 192.

[18] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 154.

[19] "SC Students Present Ideas for All-Season Desert Home," *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1949, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[20] In 1953, fifth-year design instructor A. Quincy Jones included the design of a merchant-built house as one of many real world problems for students to solve.

[21] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 175.

[22] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 169.

[23] Richard Dorman, "AIA Application for Corporate Membership," June 12, 1956, The American Institute of Architects Archives, http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/C-E/DormanRichard.pdf (accessed March 14, 2010).

[24] Alan Hess, *Googie* (San Francisco, CA, Chronicle Books, 1985), 75.

[25] Thomas Hines. *Architecture of the Sun: Los Angeles Modernism 1900-1970* (New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2010), 658.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Welton Becket and Associates, *Welton Becket and Associates* (Los Angeles, CA*:* Welton Becket and Associates. 1970), 98.

[28] William Dudley Hunt, Jr., *Total Design* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 4.

[29] Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 667.

[30] "The Product of Total Design," *Los Angeles Times*, December 6, 1964, I16, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[31] Richard Dorman to the Jury of Fellows, AIA, August 28, 1967, The American Institute of Architects Archives, http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/C-E/DormanRichard.pdf (accessed March 14, 2010).

[32] Ibid.

[33] Hunt, *Total Design,* 82.

[34] Hunt, *Total Design,* 136.

[35] Richard Dorman to the Jury of Fellows, AIA, August 28, 1967.

[36] Peter Munselle telephone interview by the author on May 18, 2011.

[37] Richard Dorman, Jr. telephone interview by the author on April 11, 2011 and Grant Dorman telephone interview by the author on February 25, 2011.

[38] These included the new Director of Design, Maynard Woodard, Harry Widman, and Francis Ruby.

[39] Richard Dorman to the Jury of Fellows, AIA, August 28, 1967.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Two for Elwain Steinkamp and one for Fillmore Crank.

[43] Allison Lyons, "The Perfect LA House," http://Surveyla.wordpress.com/2011/02/28/the-perfect-la-house/ (accessed May 1, 2011).

[44] Frank Mulcahy, "Livability Stressed in Home Design," *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1960, F1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[45] "House by Richard L. Dorman and Associates," *Arts and Architecture*, April 1960, 26.

[46] Rudolph's early experimentation with roof forms in his post-war residential work in Sarasota included the Cocoon House (1948-50) which used a catenary structure and a plastic vinyl roofing material previously used by the Navy to mothball ships. Later, Rudolph experimented with molded plywood forms as true vaults in his unbuilt Knott Residence (1951-2) and finally in the Hook Residence and Sanderling Beach Club (1952).

[47] "Triumph of Arches," *New York Times*, February 5, 1961, SM58, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[48] Dorman partnered briefly with fellow USC alum and Welton Becket and Associates employee, architect Dan Morganelli on a few commissions during Dorman's transitional period between leaving Becket's firm (1955-56) and establishing his own independent practice.

[49] Although no image of this project could be located, the barrel vault design is referenced on page 3 of Richard Dorman's application for Fellowship in the American Association of Architects.

[50] Richard Dorman, "Social Value Seen For Office Building," *Chicago Tribune*, April 22, 1972, W_B28, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[51] Ibid.

[52] Dan Thraff, "Architecture of St. Basil's Gets Support," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1969, E11, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[53] This John W. Stahl should not be confused with the John M. Stahl noted movie producer nor with C.H. Stahl for whom Case Study House No. 22 was designed by Pierre Koenig.

[54] Frederick Henry Prince created the first planned manufacturing district, the 254-acre Central Manufacturing District (CMD) in Chicago. By 1915, over two hundred companies were located in the Chicago CMD. The CMD acted as a private banker, business incubator, operator and maintenance organization for the landscaping and grounds.

[55] Charles C. Cohan, "New $38 Million Program Slated," *Los Angeles Times*, November 2, 1958, G1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[56] Ibid.

[57] For more on the Garden City movement see Garden Cities of To-Morrow written by Ebenezer Howard and published in 1902. As an urban planner and architect, Clarence Stein's work further expanded the idea.

[58] "Large Increase of Industry is Newly Slated," *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 195, F1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[59] According to a *Los Angeles Times* article from November 2, 1958, Stahl also engaged Craig Ellwood for architectural services in the CMD. The March 1959 issue of *Arts & Architecture* features two Ellwood designs for factories for John W. Stahl designed in 1958 that were never built. One was asymmetrical and one symmetrical over reflecting pools, like Mies' Crown Hall. Stahl also engaged Victor Gruen and Associates in later planning exercises for the expansion of the Electronics Center project in 1960 according to the Los Angeles Times, January 31, 1960.

[60] "Office Building Remodeling Job Furthered," *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1956, E1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[61] "New Buildings Readied In Big Development," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1957, H1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[62] Charles C. Cohan, "Overseas Lands Now Realizing Realty's Value," *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1955, F1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[63] "A Management Consultant Expands Its Services To Include AE," *Architectural Record*, April 1979, 65.

[64] John Pastier, "The Curious Case of the Odd Façade, *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1974, G8, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[65] "Dion Neutra Joins Dorman," *Los Angeles Time*s, December 30, 1962, H12, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[66] According to author Thomas Hines, the two Neutras developed friction between them over Dion's concerns with the "business of architecture, as opposed to the spiritual and psychological essence" which the elder Neutra found to be more sympathetic with the interests of his then partner, Robert Alexander. To that end, Dion chose to work for Alexander after the break-up of Neutra and Alexander. After several years there, Dion joined Dorman for a brief time, then launched his own practice.

[67] "Megabucks, Erupting Energy, Fission of Spirit," *Life*, September 14, 1962, 40.

[68] The architect Peter Munselle changed his name from Harold F. Munselle during early adulthood. As a result, his educational records and early AIA files are listed under the previous name.

[69] James Hubbart, "Architect Dorman: A Testimonial to Value of Vocational Guidance," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1961, H1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[70] B. Lamb, "Management Consultant Expands Its Services to Include AE," Architectural Record 165, April 1979, 65.

[71] Ibid.

[72] For the engineering component, TB&A brought in engineer John Day from Albert C. Martin & Associates.

[73] "Four Star and Wrather Release First Reports," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1961, 21, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[74] "Dredging Will Begin On Vast Marina Project," *Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 1961, I18, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[75] "Huntington Harbour," Huntington Harbour Development Corporation, 1962. http://dbase1.lapl.org/dbtw-wpd/exec/dbtwpub.dll

[76] "Club Tours Marina By Helicopter," *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1962, N2, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[77] "Display Ad 7," *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1966, 8, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[78] As a publication primarily targeted to builder-developers, *House and Home* magazine often included basic sales figures as evidence of a design's economic (not just aesthetic) success. In the March 1966 issue, the magazine indicated that the Dorman model "accounted for 12 sales in six months."

[79] "9 Pace-Setting Designs for the Merchant-Built Market," *House and Home*, October 1966, 95.

[80] "A Two-Story Contemporary That Stresses Openness," *House and Home*, March 1966, 106-7.

[81] Based on examination of historic aerial photographs from 1972 from www.historicaerials.com and fieldwork in June 2011.

[82] Based on a review of tract maps for each phase of the subdivision.

[83] Charles C. Cohan, "Major Electronics Program Grows," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1957, G1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[84] "Big Electronics Plant Brings 800 More Families Here," *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1958, F1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[85] Dorman and Stahl were published again in *Arts and Architecture* in July of 1960 for a 13-story tower design. It is currently unknown if the building was built as the location is unknown.

[86] Cohan, "New $38 Million Program Slated."

[87] "Restaurant With Art Display," *Architectural Record*, July 1961, 154.

[88] "McCulloch's Push Button Paradise" *Life*, May 7, 1956, 71.

[89] Frank Mulcahy, "Livability Stressed in Home Design," *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1960, F1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[90] "One Interesting and Fresh Idea Is the Multiple House," *Sunset*, October 1965, 89.

[91] Tom Cameron, "Construction Making USC Urban Center of Learning," *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 1963, I1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[92] Richard Dorman, "This Is My Best," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1959, J37, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[93] "An Achievement In Natural Integration," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1960, 10, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[94] Dorman, "This is My Best."

[95] Dan Mac Masters, "Departure from the Stereotype," *Los Angeles Time*s, May 22, 1966, 28, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[96] Dan Mac Masters, "A House of Infinite Perspective," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1971, Q12, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[97] Ibid.

[98] "9 Pace-Setting Designs for the Merchant-Built Market," *House and Home*, October 1966, 95.

[99] "Display Ad 42," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1965, D4, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[100] The Villa Angelina in Placentia totaled 256 units, another complex on Warner Avenue in Huntington Beach totaled 256 units, and 448 units were constructed on Brookhurst between Hamilton and Banning Avenues in Huntington Beach.

[101] Tom Cameron, "Albertson Ranch Becomes Site of Community for 70,000 People," *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1966, J1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

CHAPTER FOUR:
WILLIAM KRISEL: THE HOME SHOW BEGINS AT THE SIDEWALK

William Krisel (1924-) has calculated that over 40,000 of his home designs have been built.[1] His work with merchant builders also includes low-rise, medium-rise, and high-rise multi-family residential projects. While in partnership with Dan Saxon Palmer, Palmer & Krisel advocated that "The good tract house is not assembly line living, it improves both the physical shelter and the way of life of the people."[2] As a designer, this philosophy permeated all of Krisel's architecture, including elevating the design of high-rise apartments and condominiums in the 1960s.

Like Fickett and Dorman, Krisel built successful long-term relationships with developers because he fundamentally understood that merchant-built houses were products and that development was a business. Retailers understand the symbiotic relationship between architecture and sales. Famously, theatre architect S. Charles Lee expressed his philosophy: "the show starts on the sidewalk,"[3] and many film exhibitors used theatre architecture to further their business prospects. Not coincidently then, Krisel's ability to translate avant-garde design into good return on investment for merchant builders can be traced to his early training in commercial architecture. Like his employer Victor Gruen, Krisel used avant-garde modern design to build businesses. Gradually, merchant builders unleashed Krisel's talent and followed his architectural language all the way to the bank. Of developers, Krisel says:

> If you spend the time and have the ability to gain their confidence it is a win-win. Their aim is to make money and yours is to do good architecture. The developer is essentially a steady stream of work —they are the first to jump back in after a down economy, and they are the ones seeking whatever building type is marketable at that time. When houses are slow, they build apartments, high-rises, etc…They follow the money. I never had to look for work.[4]

Owing much to an organized and enthusiastic preservation community in the Palm Springs area, Krisel's 1950s tracts for developer George Alexander (as well as some of his Las Vegas designs) are now popular with a new generation of owners dedicated to restoration. However, Krisel's prolific career yielded many lesser-known tract-home developments throughout Southern California and his later work under the Krisel /Shapiro and Associates partnership is virtually unknown. This chapter will demonstrate how Krisel designed efficient tract houses that engaged buyers at the street level and provided superior spatial experiences on the interior. Further, it will showcase how Krisel's tract work for merchant builders informed his designs for more efficient and effective multi-story, multi-family residential condominium projects as the nature of developer products changed during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

To this end, this chapter will profile his early years, from his childhood to the military service that brought him in touch with the common man and how influential his early employment experiences were on his later work. This is followed by an overview of his early work with developers, the flowering of his architectural language with design-minded developers, and how the development of a "one-stop shop" for merchant builders added value to his architecture and design services. Lastly, the chapter will analyze his Ocean Towers (1971) project in-depth and begin to expand the understanding of multi-family residential development at this time.

Early Years

Krisel was born at the nexus of art, technology, replication and distribution. He came into the world in Shanghai, China on November 14, 1924. His father, Alexander Krisel, was a member of the U.S. Consular Service, a federal judge, and a

trademark/patent protection attorney who resided in China as early as 1912. By the time William was born, the elder Krisel was working as the distributor of United Artists pictures throughout the region. Ultimately, Al Krisel handled regional distribution for all the major American and French studios (which enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the film industry at the time). During the decades of the teens, twenties and thirties, the American film industry endured patent skirmishes over technology, criticism of the moral and aesthetic value of motion pictures, and the streamlined-production and mass distribution of films through the rise of the studio system. Ironically, similar criticisms would ultimately taint the merchant-built housing industry.

Affluent and living in the cosmopolitan French Concession, the Krisels were surrounded by the elite. United Artists co-founders Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplain were all guests of the Krisels in China. Every two years or so, the Krisel family made trips back to Los Angeles so that Al Krisel could negotiate distribution for upcoming films. On these occasions, the Krisel family was the extended houseguests of Fairbanks and Pickford at their legendary "Pickfair" mansion. In Shanghai, the Krisel family lived across the street from Madame Chaing Kai-Shek. William Krisel remembers, "…whenever her limo came out of her gate and if I were on my bike in the street, she would have the driver stop, put down her window and say hello and ask how the family was. She was very, very 'Western' in her daily life. A very charming lady."[5] For the young Krisel, the extraordinary was the ordinary. As a child, he was fluent in Mandarin, Shangahi dialect, Schezuan dialect, and English. In July 1937, at thirteen years old, Krisel and his family left Shanghai and returned permanently to the United States just two months prior to the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War.

Krisel's official introduction to architecture began with his father's purchase of twenty-three acres in Rancho Santa Fe and the engagement of architect Lillian J. Rice to design a Spanish Colonial Revival ranch. As his father worked back and forth with Rice on the design of the ranch, the young Krisel made sketches of his father's changes and they were sent to Rice. As described in the documentary film *William Krisel, Architect*, Krisel recalls, "She made a statement that 'he shows talent…he should be an architect.'"[6] Unofficially, Krisel was exposed to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright on the family's trips to and from the United States during which, according to Krisel, their family routinely stayed at Wright's Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.[7]

In 1938, the 13-year-old Krisel took it upon himself to write a letter to the editor of *Time* with suggestions for Franklin D. Roosevelt's planned home in Hyde Park which the magazine had published in weeks prior. Krisel wrote:

> As a 13-year old student interested in architecture, the enclosed plan will disclose additional errors to those indicated in TIME (October 17). My plan [see cut] would give a bathroom common to both bedrooms and a closet for each. Also permitting the bedrooms to obtain westerly view. The cook would find both his kitchen and bedroom much more convenient and comfortable in my plans.[8]

The magazine would provide Krisel his first architectural critique, "TIME applauds student Krisel's attempt but prefers Franklin Roosevelt's own plans of his Hyde Park "dream house." Some objections to the Krisel plan: the kitchen is too narrow, the pantry at the wrong end, windows badly spaced, partitions awkwardly arranged; and there is no way into the farther bedroom except through the nearer one. -ED."[9]

Upon their return to America, the Krisels settled in Beverly Hills across the street from Pickfair (having elected not to build the Rancho Santa Fe home in favor of being near better schools). In Beverly Hills, young Krisel added Charlie Chaplain and Fred

Astaire to his list of neighbors. He established "an architectural studio in the maid's room" where he found discarded renderings for a new house for King Vidor (the renter prior to the Krisel family's return) in the closet.[10] While attending Beverly Hills High School, Krisel shaped his own course of architectural study with a mechanical drawing teacher. He graduated at the age of sixteen. With the help of his father, he also managed to net a "sunrise to sunset" driver's license prior to becoming of legal driving age.[11] Krisel's "can do" mentality was supported at an early age, although Krisel's father established high expectations for his son's dedication, hard work, performance and achievement.[12] All of these values, along with his exposure to the business of art, technology, replication and distribution would serve the future architect well in his merchant-built housing career.

On the advice of architect Neil Deasey who suggested that if Krisel wanted to work in Southern California he should get educated locally, Krisel opted for the USC School of Architecture over Cornell University and began studying at USC in 1941.[13] After Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army Reserve. When he turned eighteen, his studies were interrupted because he was called-up for active duty. After basic training at Santa Anita, Krisel was tapped for his Chinese language skills and sent to the Army Special Training program at Pomona College, where he was trained as an interpreter for intelligence gathering. After three months, Private First Class Krisel was sent to serve with General Joseph W. "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, Commander of the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II. In this post, Krisel served as interpreter for the Army's highest-ranking officials and VIPs. He quickly rose to the rank of Master Sergeant and when General Stilwell was sent to Okinawa, Krisel remained in China to act as an interpreter

for the United States Army Observation Group to Yan'an. Krisel was awarded a Bronze Star for his valorous service to the war effort.

Figure 4:1 Krisel, left at the U.S. Army Chinese Language Interpreters Orientation Program at Pomona College and right, in Kunming, Ya'nan, China in 1943. Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

Although he was not part of the wartime construction apparatus, Krisel's military service had a profound effect on him, and ultimately, on his architecture. His time in basic training exposed him to GIs as vastly different as Harvard graduates and men without any formal education. As Krisel described, "I met men from all over the USA and from all walks of life… all of which I had not previously experienced. From

this experience I became even more dedicated to creating well-designed modern homes for the masses."[14]

Krisel was honorably discharged from service on Christmas Day 1945. In early 1946, he returned to his studies at USC. In addition to the valuable networking opportunities USC provided, Krisel selected the University for its dedication to modern architecture. "When I visited the School of Architecture in my senior year [of high school]," Krisel has said, "I saw the projects that the students were doing and was most impressed with the various techniques of presentation but mainly that each project I saw was in the modern language."[15] He also appreciated the emphasis on design versus engineering. At USC, Krisel's mentors included Maynard Lyndon, Garrett Eckbo, and his prewar fellow-student-turned-instructor, Calvin Straub.[16]

Krisel's perspective drawing teacher Verle Annis was another important influence. Annis taught the "Shades and Shadows" course. In school, Krisel quickly realized that he liked presentations that offered him the opportunity to do perspectives. According to Krisel, Annis' class "opened up a world of three dimensions" and other former students described Annis' contribution as "giving people technically important visualization skills."[17] Krisel augmented his architectural education with elective classes in watercolors, painting, and ceramics. Cultivating his natural talents and honing these skills would serve Krisel well as an architect for developers wherein the ability to quickly and beautifully execute perspective drawings was an important tool for selling architectural designs to developers, persuading lenders, and ultimately engaging the buying public. Krisel's drawings exuded elegance and a playful optimism that reflected the zeitgeist of the postwar period.

Krisel graduated from USC in 1949 with honors; he was Tau Sigma Delta and was co-recipient of the AIA Medal for excellence in grade point average for design.

"A Little Paradise" and A Big Auto-Friendly Suburban Department Store

Before the war, while Krisel was beginning his studies at USC, he approached the designer Paul Laszlo at his Beverly Hills office and offered himself "as an office boy for no pay."[18] He was immediately hired to do part-time work for twenty hours per week. The Hungarian-born Laszlo had immigrated to the United States in 1936 to escape persecution in Nazi Germany. Although trained at the Stuttgart State Academy of Fine Art and Design in Germany, Krisel appreciated that Laszlo "brought Bauhaus ideas" that coincided with Krisel's own interests in modern architecture.[19]

From Laszlo, Krisel learned about residential architecture and custom homes. Laszlo appreciated the American dream:

> I understand the desire of my fellow men to turn their immediate surroundings into a little paradise and I enjoy doing it for them. I love this dream of theirs, and I dream it with them, which is why the home I make will be a joy for them all their life long.[20]

This philosophy would be influential on the young Krisel. "Laszlo was a good architect, but a bad salesman," Krisel recalled. Ultimately, the young apprentice was responsible for creating Laszlo's distinctive "pL" logo that the designer used extensively in marketing his modern furniture line. While in Laszlo's office, Krisel also prepared drawings for the Desert Combers Country Club (1947). This project would provide inspiration for his work a decade later on Ocotillo Lodge (1957).[21]

When Krisel resumed his studies after the war, he continued to work part-time, as a draftsman for the modern architect Victor Gruen. Gruen was an Austrian émigré who fled that country in 1938. In both cases, Krisel's choice of mentors reflected his

interest in avant-garde design. During Krisel's employ from 1946-1949, the firm was known as Gruen and Krummeck.[22] At the time, Gruen, who had designed elegant modern retail stores in Vienna and New York,[23] received the commission for Milliron's. During his time with Gruen, Krisel observed both Milliron's design and construction.

Milliron's (1949) was revolutionary for a suburban department store. Located in the middle of the burgeoning Westchester postwar suburb, the store sold low- to medium-priced merchandise suited to the tract house-owning population around it. Gruen's design consolidated a three-story department store into one large double-high volume, with parking facilities, a restaurant, and a community center on the roof. Rooftop parking was accessed by two long, dynamic scissor ramps that cut across the rear façade and were visible from the parking lot. On the busy Sepulveda Boulevard elevation, Gruen conceived four elegant and integrated stage-lit pavilions angled to make their wares more visible to passing motorists and animate the façade (see Figures 4:2 and 4:3).[24] Small glass showcases or vitrines of merchandise were also placed near the automotive entrance ramps at the sides of the building. Gruen's interior space planning and merchandising design utilized a circular circulation pattern, and four color-coded merchandising sectors. The design deeply impressed Krisel.[25] Gruen's expressive, yet elegant street façade for Milliron's linked good architectural design with product sales and the automobile—foreshadowing Krisel's later merchant-built tracts and their engaging cadence from the street.

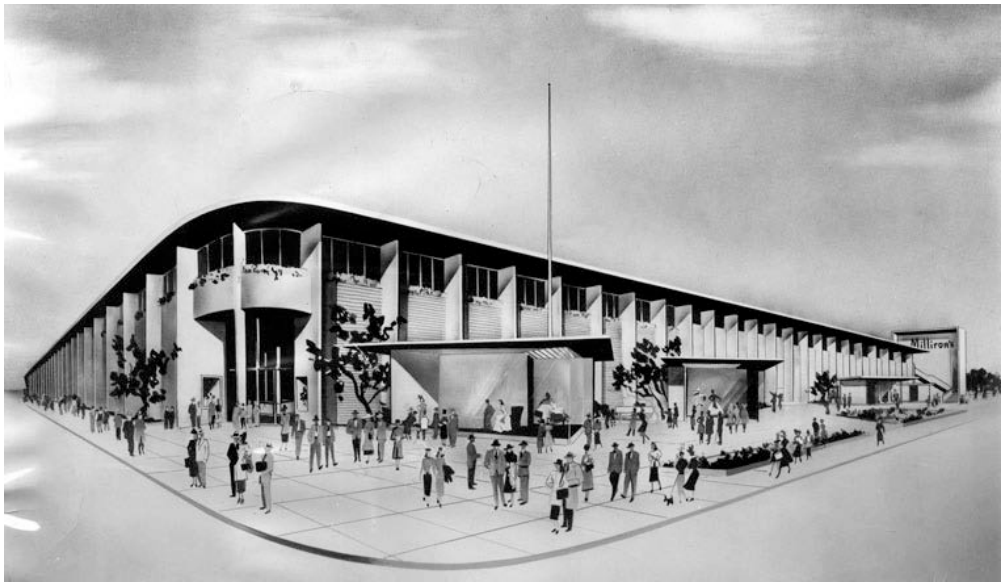


Figure 4:2 Millirons (1949) by Gruen and Krummeck. Sepulveda elevation with angled pavilions as showcases for merchandise. Courtesy of the Herald-Examiner Collection/ Los Angeles Public Library.

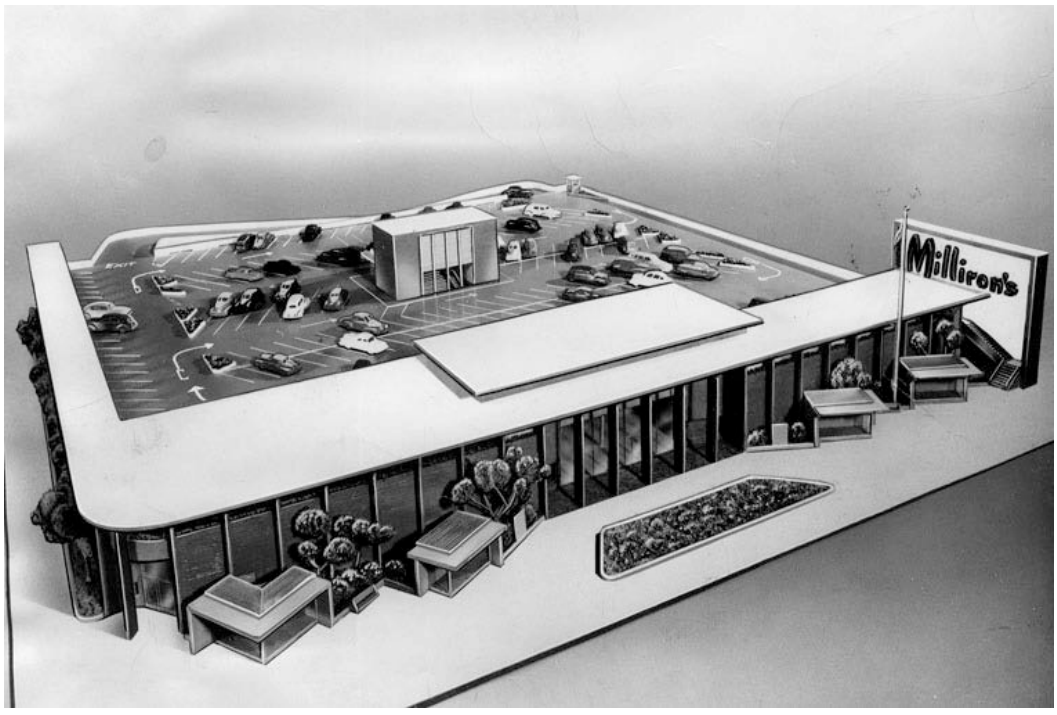


Figure 4:3 Millirons (1949) by Gruen and Krummeck. Rooftop parking with scissor ramps visible at rear. Shoppers who parked entered through an airy penthouse (called out here by the clerestory roof volume) with auditorium and children's playroom. Courtesy of the Herald-Examiner Collection/ Los Angeles Public Library.

In contrast to Laszlo, Krisel observed Gruen to be very persuasive with clients.[26] As architectural historian Richard Longstreth points out in his book *City Center to Regional Mall,* it was less about preaching modern dogma than making the business case:

> Among Gruen's strengths was his ability to translate theory into practice — to adapt the radical notions of form and space nurtured by the avant-garde to the pragmatic needs of the merchant and the investor, while making the ideas seem as if they originated with retail concerns.[27]

From his two modernist mentors, Krisel had therefore, gleaned an appreciation for the house as "a little paradise," the modern retail store as an object of auto-friendly merchandising, and how to merge avant-garde design with the needs of investors. These qualities were excellent foundations for building a successful architectural practice with merchant builders and developers. At Gruen's office, Krisel also met Dan Saxon Palmer, with whom he would form a long-term partnership in 1949.

Dan Saxon Palmer (a.k.a. Dan Weissinger) was a Hungarian-born graduate of New York University (1942). Prior to working in Gruen's office, Palmer worked for three years as a draftsman for Morris Lapidus and Seymour R. Joseph. At the time of Palmer and Krisel's partnership, Palmer was living in the T.S. Falk Apartments (1939-1940) by R.M. Schindler. To save money, the budding young architects excavated an area beneath the Falk Apartments by hand and set up shop – complete with dirt floor. When Krisel's father saw the rustic office conditions, Al Krisel agreed to financially stake the young architects in a proper office.

Of all the prewar Schindler buildings to be working out of, the Falk Apartments may have proved inspirational. As described by Gebhard and Winter, "Working with an extremely difficult hillside site, Schindler twists and turns the building so that each living unit has its own garden and roof terrace."[28] Each apartment on the hillside site is

oriented to the view and sunlight from the south, and the overall result is a twisting and turning sculptural form from Schindler's cubist period (see Figure 4:4). Issues of siting, view corridors and light as achieved by the placement of volumes in plan would ultimately dominate Krisel's future work.

Figure 4:4 Falk Apartments (1939-1940) by R.M. Schindler. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10).

Early Developments: Curb Appeal, Efficiency, and Avant-Garde Design

The firm initially sustained itself on small residential commissions and the occasional commercial building. Two commissions from 1951 are especially important to the creation of Krisel's expressionistic, avant-garde architectural language: a shopping center for developer Max Brown and a showcase house called the "Cliff House."

Palmer and Krisel established a brief early partnership with John Lindsay and were known as Palmer, Krisel & Lindsay. During this time, an important commission drew directly on Krisel's experience with Gruen: a new shopping and medical center for commercial and residential developer, Max Brown. The focal point of the $250,000 shopping center in Tarzana was the Brown Center Medical and Professional Building (1951). As pictured in the *Los Angeles Times*, the building design prominently featured an expressive butterfly roof (see Figure 4:5)—a signature feature of many future Palmer and Krisel buildings.[29]

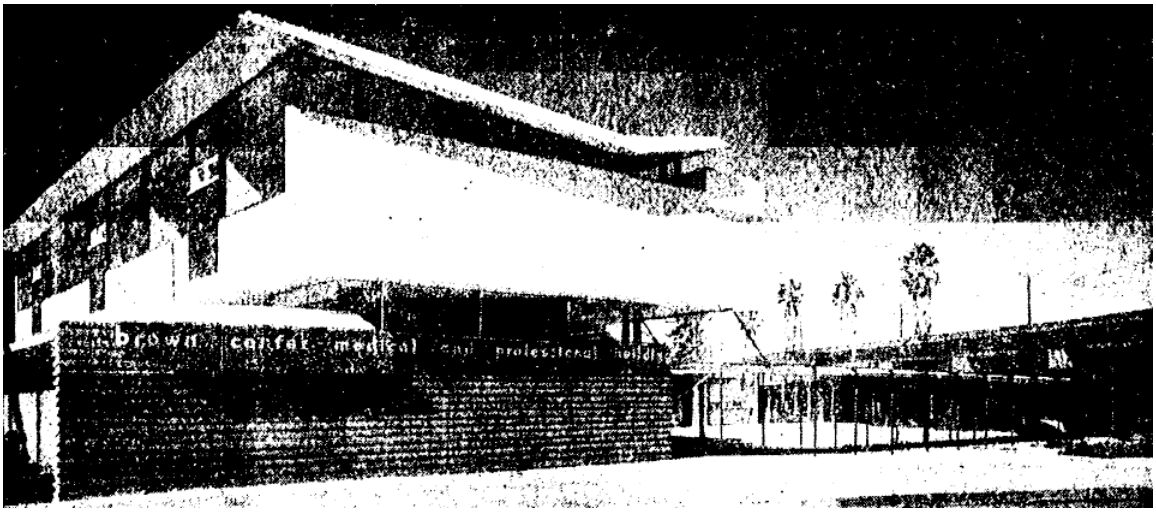


Figure 4:5 Brown Center Medical and Professional Building (1951) by Palmer, Krisel & Lindsay features signature butterfly roof element, this one in asymmetrical form. "Article 41," *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1951, E13. Copyright © 1951 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

This eye-catching butterfly design leveraged passing vehicular traffic on busy Ventura Boulevard and was designed to draw consumers into the shopping center. Unfortunately, in 1956, the shopping center was enlarged and significantly remodeled.[30]

Simultaneously, the firm received recognition for the experimental "Cliff House" for Florence Hawkins (1951) on Sunset Boulevard in West Los Angeles. A "display home" open to public touring as a benefit for the Paraplegia Research Drive, the "advanced modern" design was raised completely off the ground on six 5 ½" steel columns sunk in concrete caissons below grade.[31] Use of steel resulted in a free plan. Like the Brown Center Medical and Professional Building, it featured an expressive floating butterfly roof on the supporting steel columns (see Figures 4:6 and 4:7). The resultant space under the house was used as a carport and outdoor covered patio. The overall design is reminiscent of the Hiss Residence (1950) in Sarasota, Florida.[32] Fronting on noisy Sunset Boulevard, however, the architects elected to use cork on the front façade. As described in the *Los Angeles Times*:

> There are few walls in this house, thus keeping it light as its framework demands. Glass moves continuously around it sometimes as wall, sometimes above eye level and below the ceiling. Sitting in any one of the rooms one can look across the house in any direction without being stopped by a completely solid surface. This all makes for greater feeling of spaciousness.[33]

The signature element of Palmer and Krisel's work, the butterfly form, can be seen in such developments as Living Conditioned Homes (1957-1959), Twin Palms (1956), Northridge College Estates (1957195-8), Valley of the Sun (1957) and Paradise Palms (1961-1962). Key to the inclusion of this design element, however, was having developer clients interested only in conventional financing and not FHA-approval — which rejected both flat roofs and the butterfly.[34]

As the preceding two projects show, Krisel established himself early on as an architect able to respond to the needs of developers and engage passing motorists with his avant-garde designs.

Figure 4:6 Florence Hawkins Residence (1951) by Palmer, Krisel & Lindsay is completely suspended on six steel posts as shown in middle diagram. Photo by Joe Paul. Jean Burden, "Solved…A Hillside Dilemma," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1953, I32. Copyright © *1953 Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

Figure 4:7 Steel posts supporting the Florence Hawkins Residence (1951) by Palmer, Krisel & Lindsay allow for free plan on interior and for floating butterfly roof shown in top photo above. Photo by Joe Paul. Jean Burden, "Solved…A Hillside Dilemma," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1953, I32. Copyright © *1953 Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

After one year of partnership, John Lindsay departed the firm. Palmer & Krisel soon received a series of commissions for tract home development across the greater Los Angeles area. "My friends [at USC] were all the sons of builders," Krisel recalled.[35] Between 1953 and 1955, Palmer & Krisel designed tract housing developments for Devon Construction Company, Pioneer Land Company, Weber-Burns, Larwin Company, Mark Taper and Murray M. Strauss, Midland Properties, Linkletter Homes, and many others in areas such as Covina, West Covina, Northridge, Chatsworth, Van Nuys, Downey, La Mirada, Fullerton, Garden Grove, and Anaheim. Repeat business by many of these developers is a testimony to their success. Far from the avant-garde Mid-Century Modern designs that Palmer & Krisel would later provide for the George Alexander Company, these tracts were composed of Traditional Ranch and Contemporary Ranch-style homes. In many of these developments, Palmer & Krisel worked alongside Beverly Hills-based architect David Freedman who provided the contemporary versions of historicized motifs. Palmer & Krisel, however, retained control of the floor plans. Freedman had experience designing tract houses and the two firms worked independently for a common client—coordinating drawings but without any approval or oversight over one another's work.[36]

A good example of one of these early developments featuring collaboration between Palmer, Krisel and Freedman is Parkwood Covina (1953-4) in the San Gabriel Valley and its sister developments of the same years, Parkwood Estates (Northridge) and Parkwood La Mirada (La Mirada). Parkwood Covina was developed on the site of a 30-acre orange grove and featured "21 different exterior designs including variations of Modern, Farmhouse, French Provincial, Rustic and Ranch."[37]

The "modern" model from Parkwood Covina featured rustic board-and-batten siding and a shed roof carport (see Figure 4:16). Like Fickett before him, Krisel needed to educate many developers on the benefits and saleability of modern architecture through incremental design improvements. In contrast, in 1955 Palmer & Krisel were able to persuade developer Don Wilson to stretch the design boundaries further for his small 25-home development in Covina, Hidden Village (1955). As can be seen in Figure 4:8, Hidden Village included a more expressive modern carport.

Figure 4:8 Image at left is Parkwood Covina (1954) for Devon Construction Co. by Palmer & Krisel and David Freedman. Image at right is from Hidden Village (1955) by Palmer & Krisel, also in Covina. Photos by the author.

The 148-unit Parkwood Covina development sold out in two months, and the developers quickly mobilized its success in other locations. In Northridge (see Figure 4:9), the same Palmer, Krisel and Freedman designed models were replicated in a 299-home development called Parkwood Estates and used again with additional variations at the 540-home development, Parkwood La Mirada.

Figure 4:9 Ad for Parkwood Estates (1954) by Palmer & Krisel and David Freedman in the San Fernando Valley for Devon Construction Co. features the contemporary "Caribee" and more traditional "Devon" models. These were the same as those designed for the Parkwood Covina development of 1953-1954. Permission pending.

One of Palmer and Krisel's more interesting developments from the 1950s was the little-known Midland La Mirada (1955) for Linkletter Homes. Real estate was one of the many successful business ventures of radio and television personality, Art Linkletter. A skillful marketer, Linkletter soon saw the opportunity to cross-promote his ventures. Linkletter gave away a Midland Park Estate home as a prize during a national broadcast of his show, "People Are Funny." As a result, in March 1956, over 3,000 people visited the model homes at Midland La Mirada.[38] In 1955-1956, his company, Midland Properties, built 687 Palmer & Krisel-designed homes in Los Angeles and Orange County.[39] In each case, the Midland house designs featured an expressive carport roof which when viewed in conjunction with the gabled roof of the house created a "butterfly" effect (see Figure 4:10). By using the carport, however, Krisel did not violate FHA Standards (which would likely not have loaned against such an avant-garde roof design over the main dwelling).

Figure 4:10 Midland La Mirada (1955) by Palmer & Krisel for Linkletter Homes. Photo taken by the author.

Varying the orientation of the carports relative to the houses and street gave Midland La Mirada a visually pleasing streetscape (see Figure 4:11). It avoided visual monotony and gave each house an individual identity. Given the more historicized motifs of these early developments, the carport appears to have become an acceptable place for more modern architectural expression. A modern gesture for the modern mode of transportation — the automobile — the expressive carport was an appropriate frame through which the public could view a strong component of a Los Angeleno's identity: his or her car.

Figure 4:11 A typical street at Midland La Mirada by Palmer & Krisel, featuring an olive tree on every lot. Photo by Douglas M. Simmonds, Job 355-21, Courtesy of William Krisel Archive, Getty Research Institute. http://www.blogger-index.com/feed881082.html

The designs for Midland La Mirada and Midland Park Estates (1955) in Fullerton won NAHB Awards of Merit in January 1956 — a fact that was leveraged in advertising and marketing materials for the developments.[40] The homes also received an award from the Home Builders Institute (HBI) and were selected as Western Home of the Month, by *American Builder* magazine.[41]

An engaging architectural cadence and streetscape like that of Midland La Mirada quickly became a feature of Palmer & Krisel developments. By 1957, the idea was fully realized in Krisel's Twin Palms development in Palm Springs wherein there is only *one* floor plan for the 66-unit development. Figure 4:12 shows how one plan was rotated and applied to all lots with cul-de-sacs and a variety of rooflines providing the appearance of individuality for the homes and a pleasing architectural cadence for the development (see Figure 4:13). Twin Palms has also become renowned for having provided homeowners with exceptional privacy and view corridors.

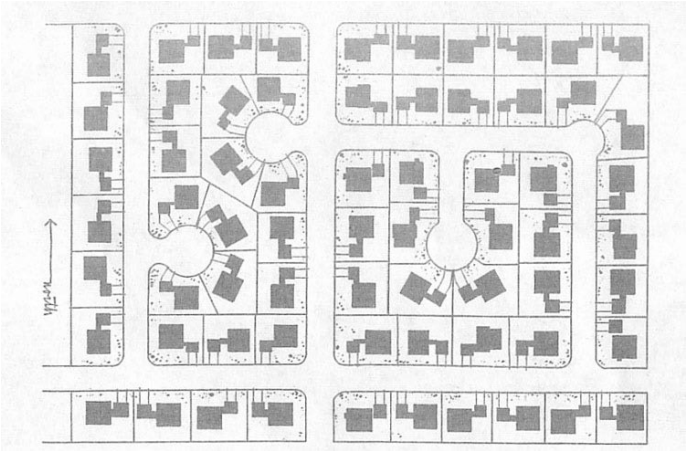


Figure 4:12 Palmer & Krisel's tract plan for Twin Palms (1956) features cul-de-sac pattern and alternating siting of house and carport plans. "Speculative Builder Houses: Palm Springs, California," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1958, 146. Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

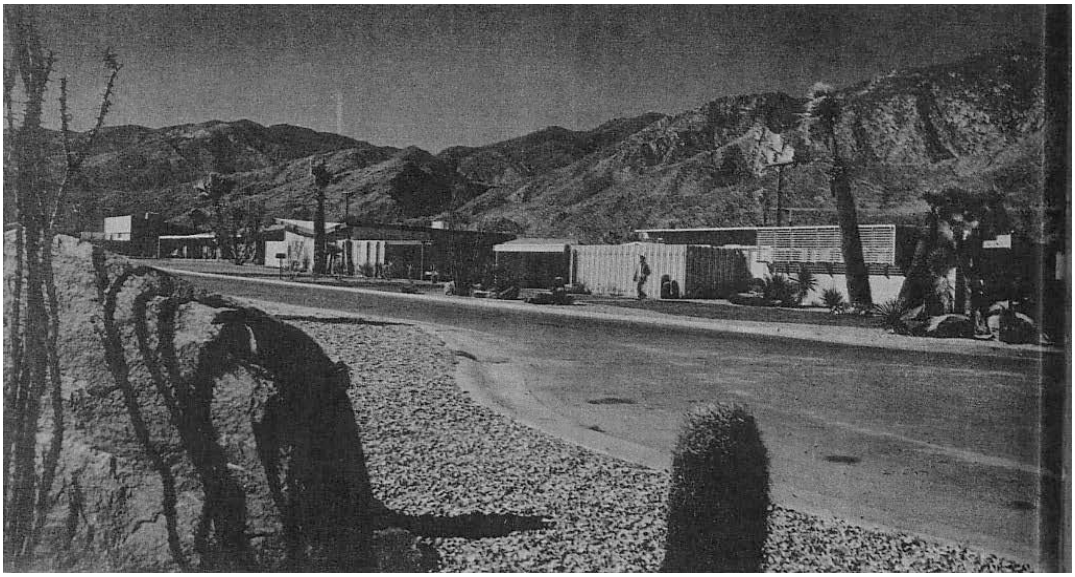


Figure 4:13 Twin Palms (circa 1957) featured one floor plan and multiple expressive rooflines giving each house its own personality and a pleasing architectural cadence. "Speculative Builder Houses: Palm Springs, California," *Progressive Architecture*, March 1958, 146. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

Plans for the Midland La Mirada development are also worthy of study for what they convey about the houses as "product" and Krisel's interest in efficiency and modern architecture as a vehicle for individual self-expression. Krisel worked hard to become facile in the prices of various building materials and was conscious that "…every line I drew cost money."[42]

Unlike architects such as Richard Neutra, whose fascination with science led him to develop ideas about the mental and physiological effects of space and modern architecture,[43] aesthetics drove Krisel designs. Rather than positioning modern architecture as a utopian solution to social problems, Krisel's Modernism was a reflection of common psychographic and behavioral patterns that affected program.

Examples of this abound in Palmer & Krisel's early tract house plans as they designed for different levels of family interaction and integration. As reported in *House and Home*:

> Recognizing that each prospective home buyer is an individual with his own special family problems, Palmer and Krisel have lately been experimenting with houses designed to accommodate not only the physical but the psychological differences that exist between human beings…their interpretations of the 'introvert' and 'extrovert' houses, [were] devised to suit the particular needs of two different types of homeowner.[44]

The plans being referred to in the above quote were the 1956 plans for Midland Park in La Mirada and the "Town and Country" home for the Larwin Company in Buena Park. The first plan (see Figure 4:14) is the one described by Dan Palmer as "extroverted" in the *House and Home* article. Its characteristics include the important movement of the hearth from the living room to the family room, signaling it as the "focal point" for activity in this plan design, as does the open kitchen and pass through. This plan is clearly designed for a family unit that entertains and interacts as a whole. The second plan (see Figure 6:1) is the "introvert" home with the parents' and children's bedrooms separated at the far ends of the plan and the family room directly adjacent from the children's bedrooms. The kitchen is located at the center of the plan to feed both of the L-shaped zones. The more formal living room (with fireplace) is open to a dining area for more private entertaining.

According to Krisel, the "introvert" and "extrovert" descriptions were developed after the creation of these plans, not before.[45] Early on, Palmer and Krisel engaged the services a publicity man named David Parry. A talented man, Parry secured speaking engagements, panel discussions and interviews for the young architects. As a result, they were often asked what they had been thinking about with a particular plan and

Parry worked with Palmer and Krisel to articulate and refine talking points including the "introvert" and "extrovert" explanation.[46]

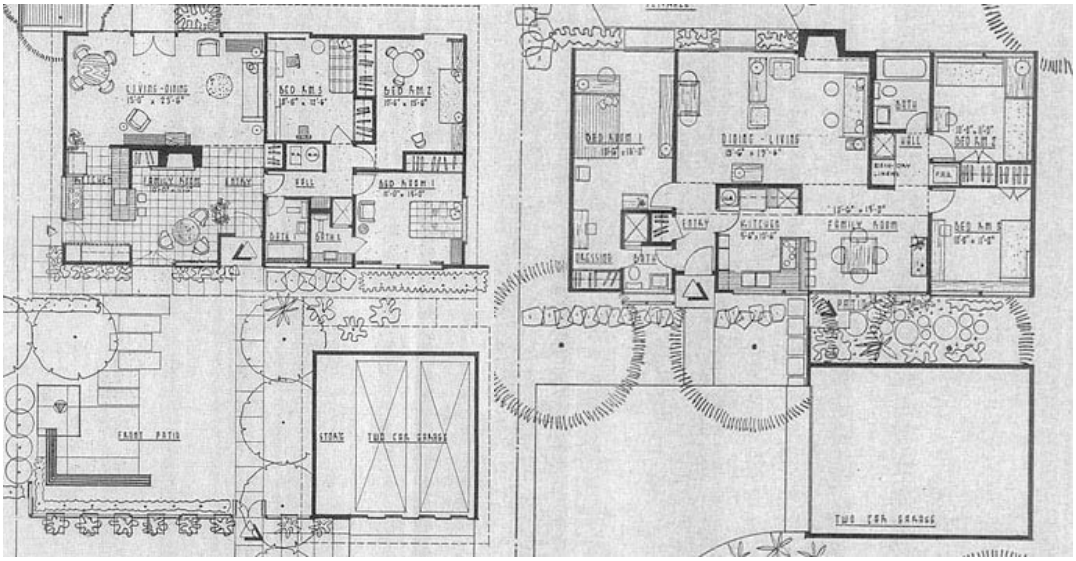


Figure 4:14 "Extrovert" plan on left from Midland La Mirada has family room as focal point for all activity. "Introvert" plan on right from Larwin Buena Park development has two interlocking L-zones for children's entertainment areas and adult entertainment areas. "Psychologically Planned Homes," *Architect and Engineer*, February 1957, 12-15. Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

According to Krisel, developers often asked for the same floor plans as previously produced in other Palmer & Krisel work.[47] A review of available floor plans for the 1950s developments proves this to be true. For example, these "introvert" and "extrovert" plans from Midland La Mirada and Larwin Buena Park appear again in the Living Conditioned Homes (1958-9) with only minor adjustments. Plan D is virtually identical to the "Introvert" plan, while Plan B is a version of the "Extrovert" with family room and children's rooms in a separate zone (see Figures 4:15 and 4:16).

Figure 4:15 Plan D from Living Conditioned Homes in Northridge is the same as the "Introvert" plan. Living Conditioned Homes by Sanford D. Adler, Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

Figure 4:16 Plan B from Living Conditioned Homes in Northridge is a version of the "Extrovert" plan with family room and children's bedrooms in one separate ` zone. Living Conditioned Homes by Sanford D. Adler, Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

By 1955, Palmer & Krisel was grossing over $400,000 per year and working with more than 40 builders. Their merchant-built houses continued to win awards from the building profession.[48] In 1957, their designs for a Signature Home in Garden Grove for Midwood Construction Company (headed by Jerry Snyder and Max Levine) as well as the "Town and Country Square" in Buena Park and Whittier for Larwin received NAHB

Awards of Merit. The Garden Grove project represents a significant case for how developers and buyers had mixed feelings about even the Contemporary Ranch houses. After just three weeks of having the home with minimal ornament on the market (see Figure 4:17), the developers gave it "the full Hansel and Gretel treatment" by giving the house an exterior makeover (see Figure 4:18).[49] The developers, however, left the plan untouched. As seen in the work of Fickett, decoupling the post-and-beam modern aesthetic from post-and-beam construction became commonplace in 1950s California tract houses.

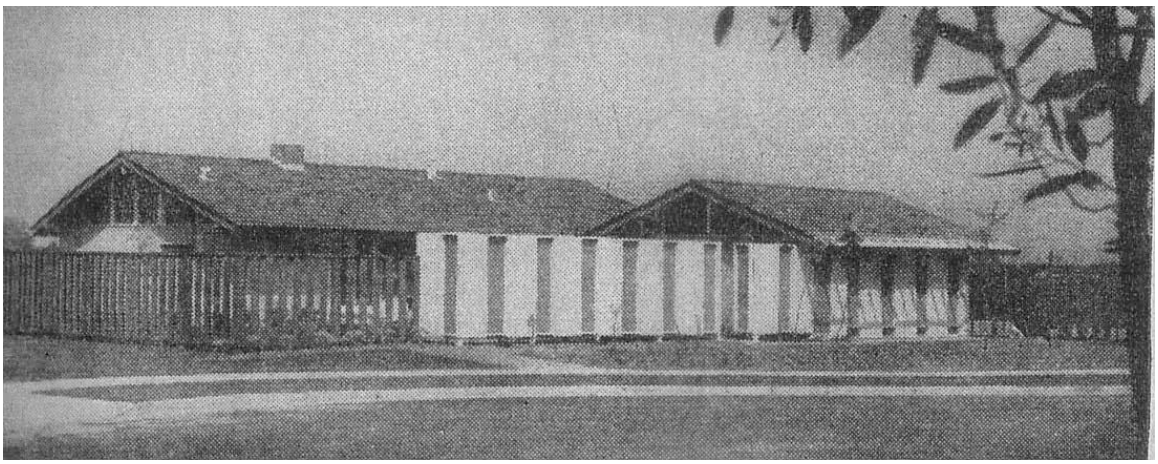


Figure 4:17 Tract house design for Max Levine and Jerry Snyder's Midwood Construction Company Signature Homes, won a 1957 NAHB award. Design as it appeared prior to makeover by builders. "TWIST: Rejected By Its Builders: This Well Planned House Goes On to WIN NAHB Award," *House and Home*, March 1957, 139. Photo by George Gennaro. Permission pending.

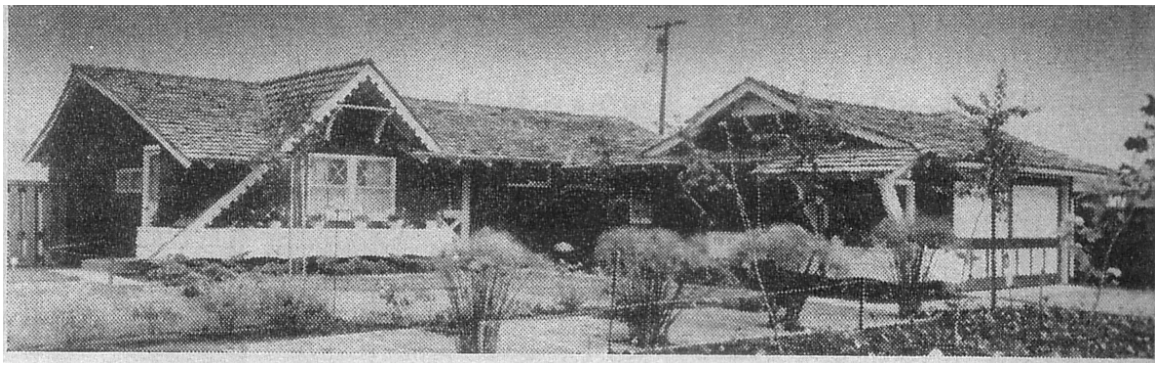


Figure 4:18 Tract house design for Max Levine and Jerry Snyder's Midwood Construction Co./Signature Homes, as it appeared after "Hansel and Gretel" makeover by builders. "TWIST: Rejected By Its Builders: This Well Planned House Goes On to WIN NAHB Award," *House and Home*, March 1957, 138. Permission pending.

During the 1956 planning and development of the Orange County homes, Palmer & Krisel and Midwood Construction also collaborated on the design and construction for a display home for the 1956 Home Show (see Figure 4:19). According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the display home "…fus[ed the] most advanced architectural styling and functional planning with the decorative heritage of the Orient."[50] The 1,851 square-foot plywood and glass, post-and-beam house with butterfly roof was and expressive modern design with only slight variation in plan from what would become the NAHB Award winner. This expressive, avant-garde design once again shows the influence of Krisel's early retail/commercial training and background as the Home Show house was a product meant to engage visitors, much like a retail shop. After the Home Show closed, the house was moved to a location in West Los Angeles (see Figure 4:20).[51] Despite the Garden Grove tract "Hansel and Gretel" incident, William Krisel and developer Jerry Snyder would later resume their architect/developer relationship during the 1960s.

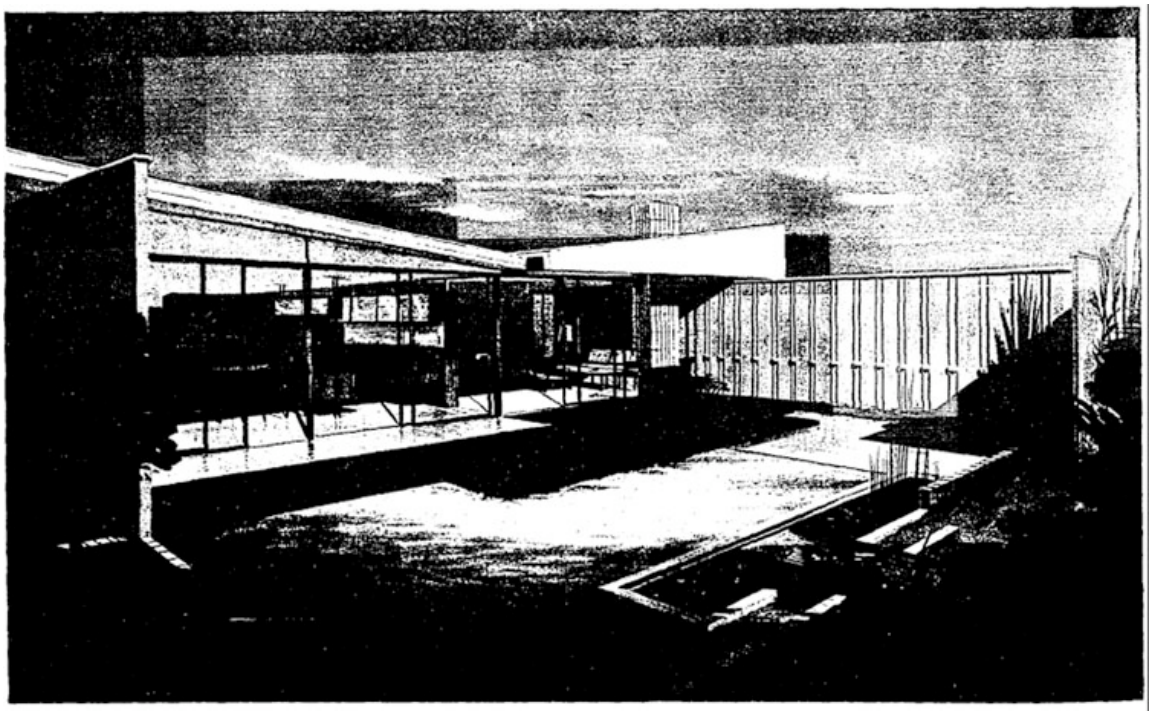


Figure 4:19 Rear elevation of Home Show House (1956) for Jerry Snyder and Midwood Construction Company. "11th Home Show," *Los Angeles Times,* June 10, 1951, N1. Copyright © 1951 *Los Angeles Times*. Permission pending.

Figure 4:20 Home Show House (1956) as reconstructed on South Saltair Avenue in West Los Angeles. Photo by the author.

Krisel is best known for his relationship with developer George Alexander and his son, Robert. Krisel's first project for The George Alexander Company was for Robert, to whom George had provided some land on which they could experiment with design in tract housing.[52] To the elder Alexander's surprise, the houses were both aesthetically successful (see Figure 4:21) and made a bigger profit per house than previous Alexander developments. The tract would go on to become Corbin Palms (1954-1955), a four-phase 300-home development and thereby establish a long and fruitful partnership between the architects and the Alexanders. Together they built thousands of houses, most of which can be found in the Palm Springs area. A significant factor in the houses developed for the Alexanders was that the developers did not seek FHA loan approval,[53] and therefore, the designs did not have to conform to limiting Minimal Property Standards.[54] Tracts for the Alexanders include Twin Palms (1956) and the Racquet Club Road Estates (1959-1962).

Figure 4:21 Example of butterfly roof design used extensively in the Palm Springs developments for George Alexander. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Used with permission. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10).

With the success of the Alexanders' projects and the Eichler developments in Northern California, a few Southern California developers began to embrace a more avant-garde modern aesthetic. Few architects could implement that as well as or at the scale of Palmer & Krisel. Julian Weinstock hired them to design his predominantly modern Northridge College Estates (1957-1958). Outside of Los Angeles, Leonard Drogin's San Diego-based Drogin Construction Company hired Palmer & Krisel to create 1,800 square-foot Mid-Century Modern tract houses in Pacific Beach (1960-1961) and Las Vegas-based developers Irwin Molasky and Merv Adelson (of La Costa fame) worked with Krisel on Paradise Palms (1961-1962) to develop hundreds of houses in Las Vegas. Back in Palm Springs in 1963, the Holstein Company hired Palmer & Krisel to design the approximately 200-unit, all-modern Sandpiper (1958 & 1963). Unfortunately, Palmer & Krisel's working relationship with the Alexanders ended tragically in November 1965 when father and son were killed in a plane crash near Palm Springs.

Of the expressive modern developments, one of the most interesting is Sanford D. Adler's Living Conditioned Homes (1957-1959). Palmer and Krisel had previously worked with Adler and his son-in-law on Storybook Village (1956), a predominantly contemporary Ranch-style development in Northridge. Because of the two recessions during the decade, developers increasingly turned to architecture to differentiate their products. So, for their next project together, Krisel persuaded Adler's son-in-law to try a comprehensively avant-garde Mid-Century Modern development (see Figure 6:3), Living Conditioned Homes (1957-9).[55]

The idea of the "Living Conditioned Home" appears to have originated in 1955 with the magazine, *Living for Young Homemakers*. A shelter magazine eager to capitalize

on the advertising, merchandising and promotional opportunities associated with the display home, the magazine identified a series of "Hotpoint Living Conditioned" homes for tour in several markets around the country. The homes were meant to be "architecturally indigenous to the particular region in which [they were] built," and feature six aspects of "Living Conditioning:" light, sound, climate, safety, space, and color.[56] The magazine continued the promotion annually. In 1956 and 1957, in an effort to broaden the appeal of the promotion to advertisers and in-kind donations, the sponsors became local/regional energy companies and the term "Electri-Living" was added to the promotion. Between May and September 1955, the furnished display homes were toured by 3 million people. Styles for the homes ranged from avant-garde modern, to contemporary and traditional ranch.

The magazine makes no mention of a submission or juried selection process, so the homes were technically not "award winners." However, the Living Conditioned Homes brand was aggressively marketed by the magazine throughout the year and participating sponsors used the somewhat misleading phrase in their advertising.

It is not known how Adler and his son-in-law became acquainted with *Living for Young Homemakers* magazine, but in 1957 they teamed with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to create a tract of "Living Conditioned Homes." These homes were marketed aggressively using the magazine's endorsement and their concept of six types of "Living Conditioning." It is quite likely that the idea came from Krisel and Palmer's marketing and publicity man, David Parry. Parry is credited on the sales brochure and graphics (see Figure 4:22) for Living Conditioned Homes and the level of integration in the advertising, publicity and collateral materials demonstrates a sophisticated

marketing hand. Parry would have also been well positioned to know of the magazine's program and view it as a way to leverage publicity. The concept of different types of "Living Conditioning" also is evocative of the types of message points that Parry was coaching Palmer and Krisel on with the "psychological-based design" and "introvert and extrovert plans" discussed previously.

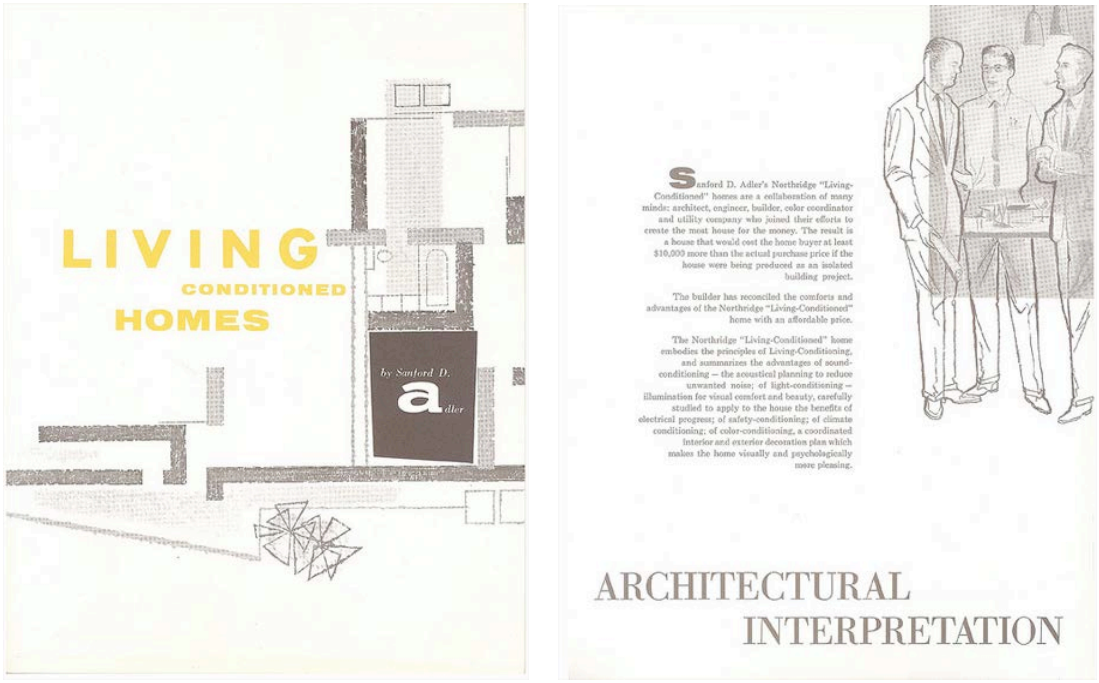


Figure 4:22 Cover and page from sales brochure for Living Conditioned Homes created by David Parry for Palmer & Krisel and developer Sanford D. Adler. Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

Regardless of where the original idea came from, the Living Conditioned Homes were a tour de force of design and marketing. Palmer and Krisel retained control over every element of the project including color consulting by Doris Palmer. Based on the initial month's sales response, Adler purchased additional acreage adjacent to the tract and expanded the number of available homes from 125 to 160.[57] By March 1958, Adler

made the homes "available for construction anywhere in the Los Angeles metropolitan area for approximately $21,000"[58] on previously owned lots. How many of these may have been constructed is unknown. In May 1958, the Living Conditioned tract was expanded again to another fifty homes for a total of over 200 homes.

Once again, Krisel's interest in building efficiency is evidenced in this development: the 200 hundred homes were limited to four basic floor plans. The buyer was allowed to express his or her individuality through elevation design. Each of the four Living Conditioned plans (A, B, C, and D) was available in four avant-garde Mid-Century Modern elevations (see Figures 4:23, 4:24, 4:25, and 4:26) for a total of sixteen designs that could be reversed or flopped on their parcels. The result was once again a diverse streetscape appealing to homebuyers cruising the Valley for a new home.

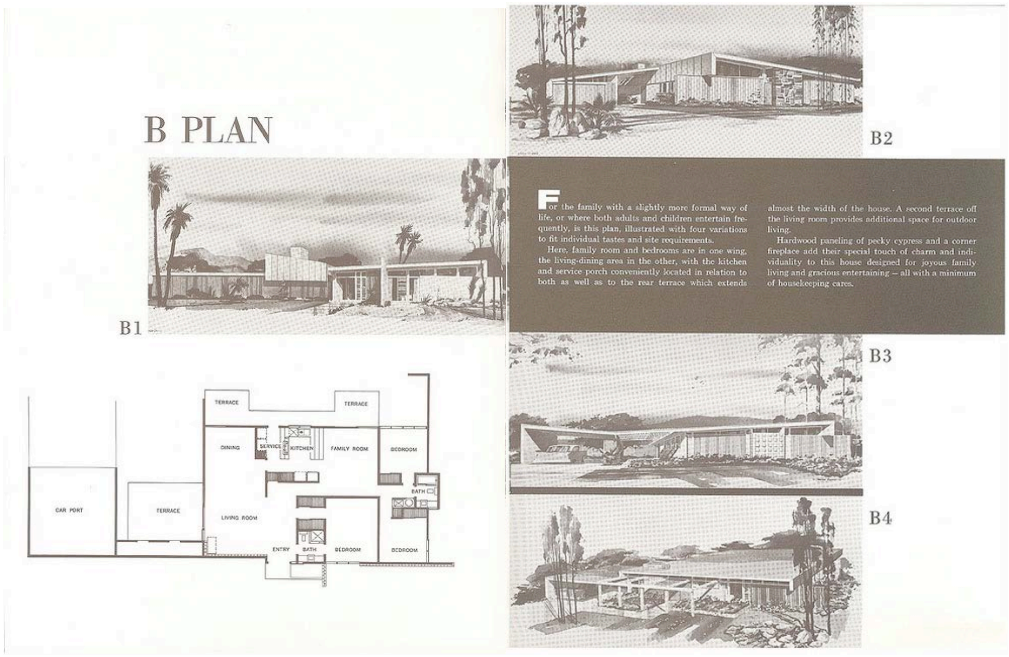


Figure 4:23 The four available elevations for the B Plan in Living Conditioned Homes. Living Conditioned Homes by Sanford D. Adler, Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

Figure 4:24 Model A4 from the Living Conditioned Homes. Photo by the author.

Figure 4:25 Model C2 from the Living Conditioned Homes. Photo by the author.

Figure 4:26 Model D3 from the Living Conditioned Homes. Photo by the author.

In 1958, the architects received an award for the Living Conditioned Homes from *American Builder*. That same year, Palmer & Krisel won two more NAHB Awards for their designs for an Alexander subdivision in Palm Springs, and a subdivision house for Lone Star Builders of El Paso. The accolades were so frequent and consistent that in March 1959, upon winning of their fourth straight NAHB Award for a Racquet Club home in Palm Springs, the *Los Angeles Times* profiled Palmer & Krisel in their feature article, "How to Win Prizes for Tract Houses."[59]

Krisel rarely did custom homes. Like Fickett, they tended to be residences for his developer clients. One of Krisel's significant custom homes of the period was the architect's own residence of 1956. Working on a construction budget of $15,000, Krisel used the home as an opportunity to design a flat-roofed house with an atrium, which he had not yet been able to persuade his clients to do. Acting as general contractor for the construction of this home, Krisel learned the costs and efficiency measures associated with construction and his new ideas. Upon seeing Krisel's home, George Alexander asked for cost estimates (which Krisel quickly articulated) and requested similar features to be integrated into upcoming development plans.[60]

As the preceding analysis has shown, Krisel's merchant-built houses of the 1950s provided curb appeal for buyers and homeowners, exceptional efficiency for builders, and a platform for the avant-garde Mid-Century Modern aesthetic. Along with Mandarin, Krisel became fluent in speaking the language of builders: economy, marketing, and sales. Krisel applied best practices in plan development and construction techniques to reduce risk and cost for merchant builders and, in so doing, created

developments known for their privacy and individuality. They were the antidote to the faceless postwar suburb.

P&K: "One Coordinated Effort" for Developers

As early as 1953, Palmer & Krisel's name began appearing in ads for the developments they designed. As previously discussed, developers who wanted a multiplicity of architectural elevations, not just avant-garde modern, were served by the architects coordination with David Freedman. It soon became rapidly apparent to the young architects that there were many services needed by the developers: planning, architecture, landscape, interior design, color-consulting, graphics, etc.[61] The firm began teaming up with C. Tony Pereira, color consultant, to provide these services. For some clients, Krisel's wife, Corinne, or Palmer's wife, Dorothy, provided the interior design.

In 1956, the firm established its own graphic and interior design department, headed by Tom Laursen. A print and serigraph artist who had taught at Los Angeles' Chouinard Art Institute, Laursen and his department were responsible for providing complete interior supervision, display materials, sales brochures, advertising, and all related design products.[62] By working with the developers to control the marketing materials (using the firms renderings and perspective drawings), Palmer & Krisel could deliver a more consistent and integrated approach to marketing the merchant-built houses. Just as the young draftsman Krisel had developed a logo for Paul Laszlo, the firm was now helping the developer to create a branded product for potential buyers.

In addition to being a good designer, Krisel often brought more to the product concept than just plans and elevations. For example, he understood that having two palm trees in front of every house at Corbin Palms could differentiate one development

from another among buyers as well as "provide a pleasing composition as one drove or walked the streets."[63] Furthermore, Krisel ingeniously used construction debris from each house to create landscaped "mounds" instead of flat yards at Corbin Palms — enhancing the landscaping and cadence of the tract and saving developers hauling fees.[64] Inspired by his mentor and occasional collaborator the landscape architect Garret Eckbo, Krisel encouraged Midland Properties to retain mature olive trees from the original grove at Midland La Mirada and use them as selling features. Such strategies differentiated the client's tract from the competition — at which newly constructed boxes often sat in barren landscapes. Krisel employed a similar strategy for developer Harlan Lee. In marketing terms, Palmer & Krisel brought value-added to the development process and the advantage of "one coordinated effort" for developers that became a cost-efficient, one-stop shop that also resulted in better design integration.

An example of this can be seen in a sales office for an unidentified tract that appears in the A. Quincy Jones book, *Builders' Homes For Better Living*. Jones attributed the tract to Palmer & Krisel.[65] One of the model homes was completely outfitted with modern display cases for tract plan models and panel displays for each model's perspective drawings— all against the architectural backdrop of a wall of floor-to-ceiling glass with vistas open to the new subdivision (see Figures 4:27, 4:28, 4:29 and 4:30). The sales office design and merchandising graphics shown here are consistent with the types of services typically provided by Palmer & Krisel. All of this was enabled by the houses' post-and-beam construction. Use of the post-and-beam method freed the interiors for modern living — or modern merchandising— and back again.

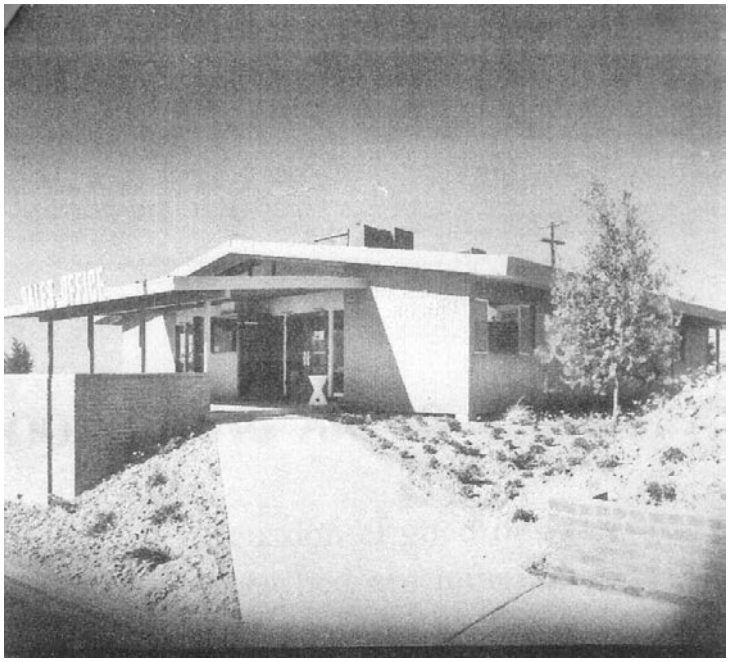


Figure 4:27 Sales office for an unidentified tract attributed to Palmer & Krisel by A. Quincy Jones. Photo by Julius Shulman. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

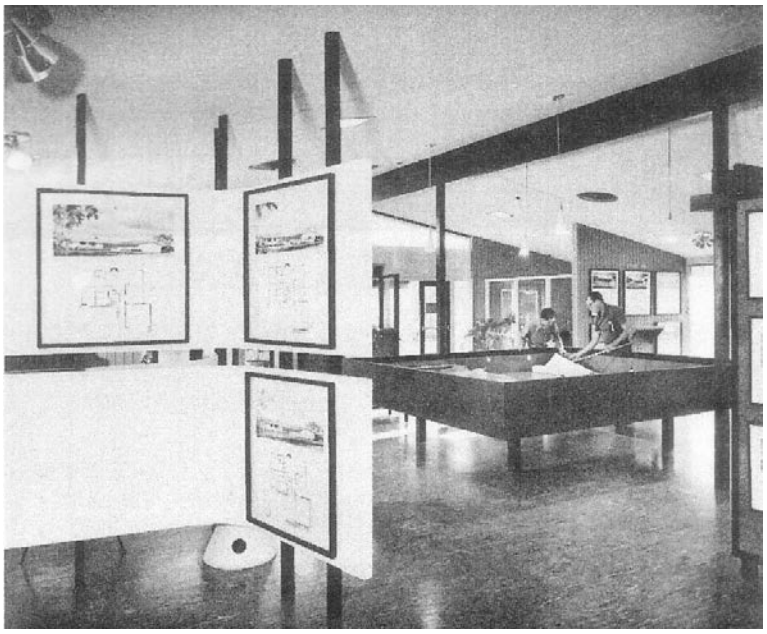


Figure 4:28 Sales office for an unidentified tract attributed to Palmer & Krisel by A. Quincy Jones. Photo by Julius Shulman. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

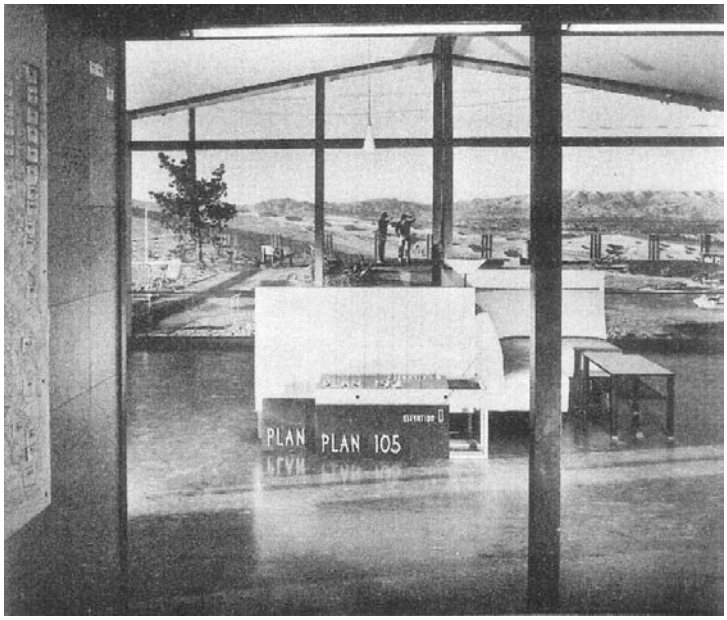


Figure 4:29 Sales office for an unidentified tract attributed to Palmer & Krisel by A. Quincy Jones. Photo by Julius Shulman. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

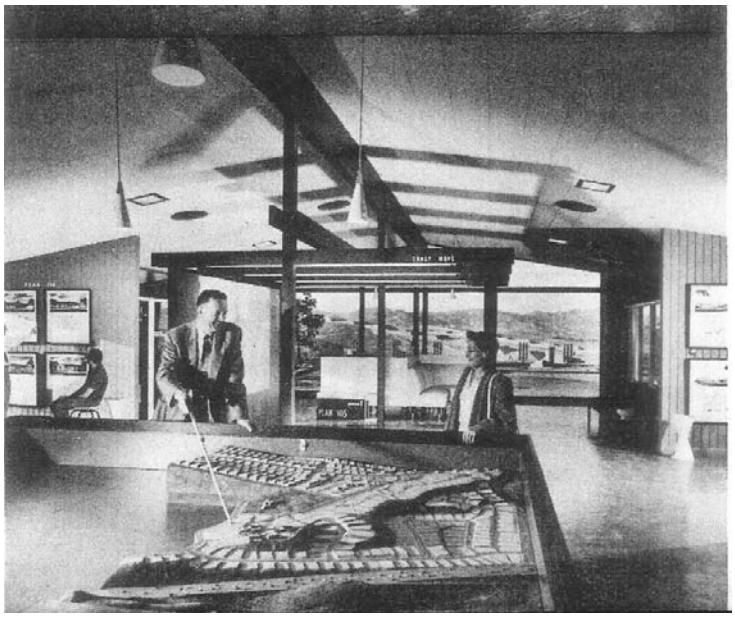


Figure 4:30 Sales office for an unidentified tract attributed to Palmer & Krisel by A. Quincy Jones. Photo by Julius Shulman. Copyright: © J. Paul Getty Trust. Julius Shulman Photography Archive, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute (2004.R.10). Permission pending.

Krisel applied the same focus on efficiency to his own practice that he did to his developer projects. After finding out about the ubiquitous 8 ½" x 11" "book of details" used by Richard Neutra's office to streamline plan preparation, Palmer and Krisel quickly adopted the practice as their own. Reproducing appropriate pages from such a book for a tract, saved countless hours in redrawing blueprints and details that appeared in multiple tracts.[66]

With respect to publicity, Palmer & Krisel wisely negotiated with developers that their names would appear in ads and featured prominently in all articles promoting the development (as opposed to an afterthought at the end of a piece). According to Krisel, that was "…part of the deal…and we monitored and reinforced it."[67]

Like Edward Fickett, Palmer & Krisel also offered their builders optional "extras" such as consultation with the FHA, VA, lenders, negotiation with city or county building departments, and construction supervision. Palmer and Krisel understood that good, salable design was only one of the many services provided by successful architects who worked with merchant builders.

How Tract Home Planning and Design Elevated Residential High-Rise Design

As previously discussed, during the 1960s Southern California residential development shifted from single-family residential to multi-family residential. The Modernist vision for such development was nothing new: it had had been conceived by Le Corbusier in his plan for Paris of 1925, in Richard Neutra's studies for Rush City Reformed during the 1920s, and Frank Lloyd Wright's plan for Broadacre City in the 1930s. As the following analysis will show, Krisel's postwar merchant-built tracts played an influential role in his development of a new approach to high-rise residential design

during the 1960s. One project in particular, the Ocean Towers (1971) in Santa Monica exemplifies how important the dialogue was between single-family residential tract planning and innovation in high-rise planning and design.

One developer who successfully made the transition between single-family residential and multi-family residential development was Jerome (Jerry) H. Snyder. During the 1950s, Snyder had partnered with Max Levine as Midwood Construction Company/Signature Homes on several Orange County, San Fernando Valley, Palmdale, West Los Angeles, and Newhall developments. Despite Levine and Snyder's early makeover of a Palmer and Krisel design as a Hansel and Gretel cottage, over the years the developers became increasingly interested in how architecture and planning could add value to their products. Snyder specifically guided the development of the controversial Beverly Glen Canyon subdivision by engaging architect Barry A. Berkus to plan with the contours of the hillside property and give high priority to greenbelt areas.[68]

In June 1969, the J. H. Snyder Company formed a joint venture with New York-based Loews Theaters to develop real estate in Southern California and across the country.[69] Between 1949 and 1969, Snyder had developed over 15,000 homes valued in excess of $150 million[70] and developed a reputation as "…a practical optimist with a talent for picking the location of new developments."[71] The Loews-Snyder joint venture immediately embarked on such projects as Park Yorba Linda (1969), Serra Park (1969) in Northern California, and in March 1970 announced plans for 2,000 townhouses in Staten Island, New York called the "Village Greens." All projects stressed "Californian urban environmental concepts" in planning, interior design and merchandising.[72] The Village

Greens plan called for "a landscaped preserve" and techniques that had been commonplace in California for years (such as complete interior design of the models vs. just furniture display) were employed. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, California-based interior designer Carole Eischen, who designed the model homes for Village Greens, was "…surprised to find that eastern builders rope[d] off the rooms of their model homes giving them 'a museum look.'"

For the first Loews-Snyder Southern California venture into high-rise planning and development, Snyder selected the newly teamed Krisel/Shapiro & Associates. Having officially dissolved his partnership with Dan Saxon Palmer in 1966, Krisel practiced on his own for approximately three years before forming a new partnership with Abraham Shapiro in 1969.[73] Shapiro was born in Tel Aviv and educated at the Hebrew Institute of Technology. He received a Master's degree in Architecture from Columbia in 1953. Locally, he had worked as a draftsman for modern architect Kenneth Lind. At the time of the merger, Shapiro had significant experience in high-rise design and construction, which Krisel did not. Prior to joining the partnership, Shapiro's individual practice was responsible for office and medical buildings.

In the late 1960s, Snyder and Loews had purchased a group of parcels in one of Santa Monica's oldest and most prized locations: the Santa Monica Palisades. Located at the northern end of the Palisades on the eastern side of Ocean Avenue, the site potentially afforded views of the ocean to the west, of Santa Monica Canyon and the mountains to the north and east, and of the pier and coastline to Palos Verdes to the south. In 1966 Santa Monica, once a resort community and self-contained city, became one of Los Angeles' newest suburbs with the completion of the Santa Monica Freeway

extension. Ocean Avenue, both north and south of the pier, soon became the target of developers who saw opportunity in the aging residential areas. Under the guise of urban renewal, the controversial Santa Monica Redevelopment Plan of the late 1950s, called for the clearance of several blocks of beachfront property in Ocean Park and the construction of a new high-rise community, Santa Monica Shores (1964-1966). Other parcels received individual zoning variances and soon the construction of high-rise residential buildings such as the Shorecliff Apartments (1963) by A. Quincy Jones was underway.

Krisel/Shapiro's design for Ocean Towers (1971) can best be understood in the context of their almost simultaneous planning of another Snyder and Lowes project: Coronado Shores.[74] Snyder and Loews purchased 35 acres along Coronado's Silver Strand and invested $75 million in the development of a community of ten 15-story apartment buildings called Coronado Shores. Together with Krisel/Shapiro, the team envisioned the development as a series of high-rise buildings with ample open space, landscaping, and recreational facilities planned between them, rather than a solid mass of mid-rise structures as had been zoned for the area. With the high-rises, the development preserved 75 percent of the 35-acre site for landscaping.[75] Constructed according to Krisel/Shapiro's vision over a series of seven years, Coronado Shores contained approximately 1,500 units designed for upwardly mobile empty nesters and second-home buyers seeking a relaxed resort-based lifestyle. Located on a long narrow spit of land between the Pacific Ocean and Glorietta Bay, the property afforded views of the ocean as well as the city of San Diego and distant hillsides. For Coronado Shores, Krisel devised two efficient building plans: a rectangular tower and a square tower. As

Figures 4:31 and 4:32 show, six rectangular towers are interspersed with four square towers. The rectangular towers are rotated 90 degrees and the square towers are rotated 45 degrees to provide unobstructed views for a majority of apartments. Parking is concentrated within each tower in two levels on pedestals beneath each building, freeing up more acreage for landscaped areas rather than parking lots or structures. Priced between $33,000 and $98,900, units in the first two towers were built and sold out within two years of groundbreaking. While the project was in phased development, the California Coast Commission was established. The agency, charged with protecting public access to coastal resources, requested the developers provide a public parking lot and access road not contained in the original design. Krisel/Shapiro accommodated this request (as shown in Figures 4:31and 4:32) while preserving the privacy and view corridors of the original plan.

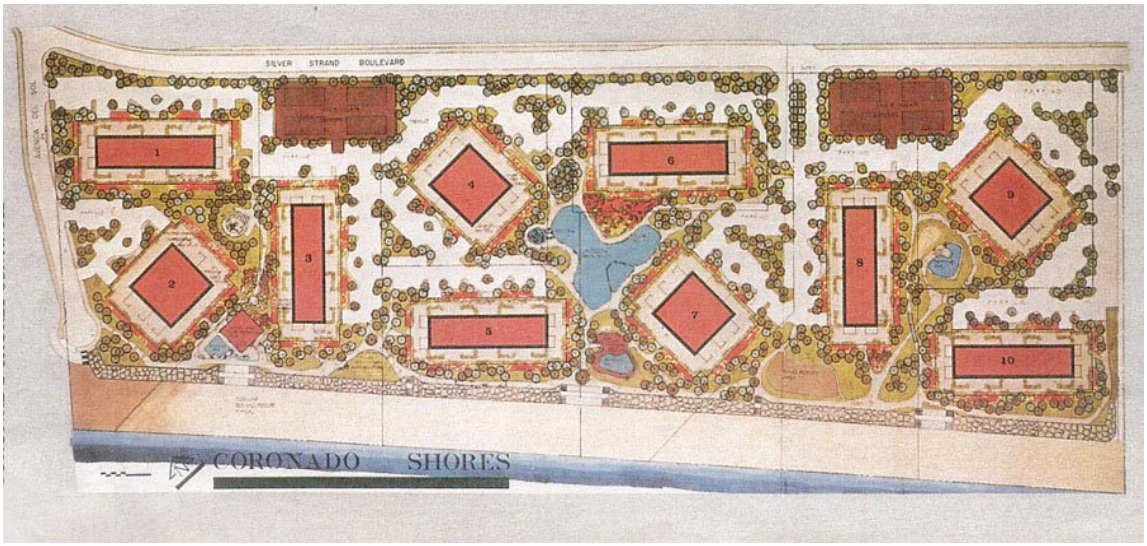


Figure 4:31 Plan of Coronado Shores circa 1969. "For Well Heeled Empty Nesters, High-Rise Condominiums On A Choice Waterfront Site," *House and Home*, September 1972, 80. This plan was conceived prior to the establishment of the costal commission and modified subsequently at their request. Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

Figure 4:32 As-built plan of Coronado Shores after Coastal Commission requested changes to original plan. Note slight alteration to placement of three buildings at right to accommodate access road and public parking lot. Angles and view corridors were maintained in the revised plan. Photographs, drawings and tract brochure reproductions used herein are from William Krisel's personal collection and are used by permission of William Krisel, AIA-E, Architect.

The roots of the Coronado Shores planning exercise lie with Krisel's years of experience in planning merchant-built housing developments. Krisel's interest in rotating, spacing and flipping a single plan (such as he did at Twin Palms in Palm Springs) to provide each home with a view, privacy and claim to the interstitial space between the houses made the spatial experience within each house unique. He applied these same principles at Coronado Shores and gave the development a dynamic architectural cadence by creating circulation pathways and vistas on the diagonal that are reminiscent of his innovative plan for the Sandpiper (1957).

Although the Ocean Towers was not on a 35-acre parcel, Krisel utilized a similar planning concept by creating two L-shaped buildings that could be rotated "…at a 45-degree angle (see Figure 4:33) to each other to maximize the ocean view" for each of the available 317 rental apartments.[76] Krisel recalls the design for Ocean Towers was driven by three factors: efficiency, ocean view corridors, and existing pilings that had been sunk into the ground by a previous owner.[77] Synder purchased the site after groundbreaking and some initial construction work had begun.[78] When a survey revealed that the

existing work was not sufficiently engineered to support Snyder's plans, Krisel was forced to design around the existing pilings. The result was two towers on a common pedestal connected by common lobby and recreational facilities such as gym, pool and patio. A common entry created a dynamic interplay of space between them serving to both unify and distinguish each tower from the other, maximize occupant privacy, and provide view corridors for each resident (see Figures 4:34 and 4:35). Eight out of every ten apartment units per floor had ocean views while the remaining two had city views. A right-angle cut at the corner of the L-shape provided expansive coastal views in two directions for the most valuable apartments.

Figure 4:33 Aerial view of Ocean Towers in 1972 by Krisel/Shapiro and Arthur Froelich & Associates shows two L-shaped towers rotated at 45 degrees for maximum views in all directions. Used with permission. http://www.HistoricAerials.com.

Figure 4:34 Front elevation of Ocean Towers (1971) by Krisel/Shapiro shows how towers have been angled for maximum views and shared public areas. Photo by John Berley.

Figure 4:35 South-facing tower at Ocean Towers rotated at 45-degrees provides views of Santa Monica and the coastline as well as acts as an attractive gateway to the San Vicente Blvd. corridor from Ocean Ave. Photo by John Berley.

Krisel's unique approach to the form and siting of Ocean Towers is even more evident when the project is compared with two other Santa Monica high-rise apartment projects: the Santa Monica Shores (1964-1966) by Welton Becket and Associates and the Shorecliff Apartments (1963) by A. Quincy Jones.

The Santa Monica Shores Apartments were part of the 30-acre Santa Monica Redevelopment Agency urban renewal project in Ocean Park. The two extant apartment buildings were originally part of a 15-building residential development planned and designed by Welton Becket & Associates for developers Del Webb Construction. Noted for their master planning activities and their corporate architecture, Becket's design was selected from ten submissions. The plan (see Figure 4:36) called for a series of rectangular towers plotted orthagonally among lavishly landscaped areas and recreational facilities. The two extant 17-story towers totaling 532 units were the first concrete structures in Los Angeles County to exceed the 13-story height limit.[79] The remaining elements of the plan were never executed as envisioned by Becket. However, the plan shares much in common with other Becket plans for commercial and office complexes such as the Cullen Center (1963) and the Tishman Airport Center (circa 1965). It does not prioritize the residential considerations of view, light, privacy and personal patio space for outdoor engagement.

In contrast, the competition plan for Santa Monica Shores submitted by Ben and Jim Deane of Deane Brothers (a Southern California developer of houses) shows a planned development with a combination of square towers and L-shaped buildings angled towards the ocean views and view corridors created through the other towers (see Figure 4:37). Like the Krisel plan for Coronado Shores, the Deane Brothers appeared

to draw from their experience in residential tract development to inform their design and create more units with views— thereby enhancing the salability and price points of the average individual apartment unit.

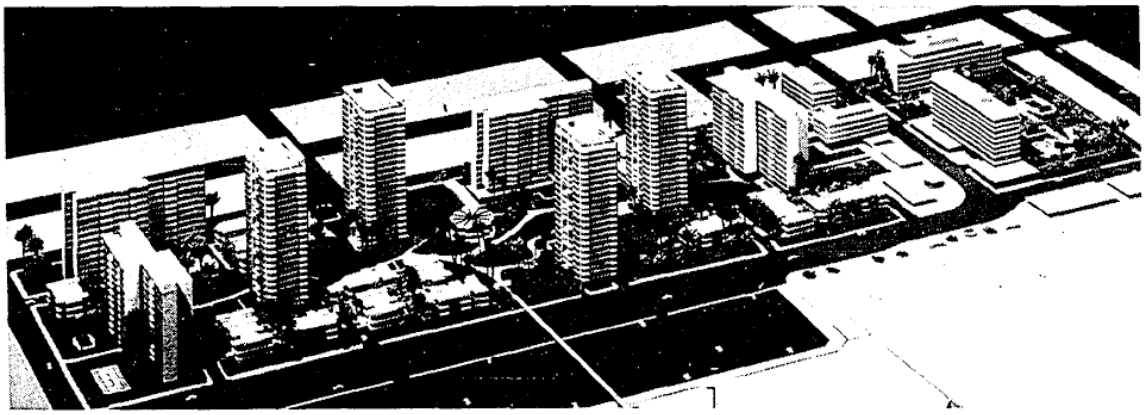


Figure 4:36 Welton Becket and Associates plan for Santa Monica Shores development features orthogonal layout of rectangular tower buildings. "Princely Vision Fades for Cinderella Project," *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1977, WS1. Copyright © 1977 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

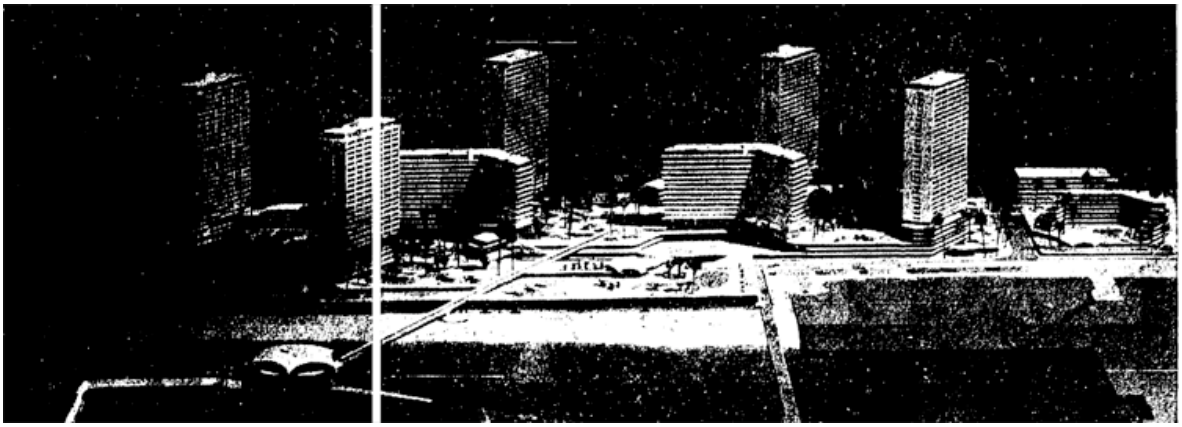


Figure 4:37 Deane Brothers plan for Santa Monica Shores development features L-shaped buildings rotated to capture views. "$60 Million Skyline Planed for Santa Monica," *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1961, P1. Copyright © 1961 *Los Angeles Times*. Reprinted with Permission.

Aesthetically, Krisel's Ocean Towers were exquisitely modern in form and in 1973 the project was awarded a Pacesetter Award for its design.[80] Liberated by the use of concrete construction,[81] Krisel opened up the plans for these units and was thereby able to draw views and light through the units into secondary rooms such as the kitchens, much as he also did in Coronado Shores. Structural engineers Erkel, Greenfield and Associates were the engineers of record for Ocean Towers.

A comparison of Krisel's Ocean Towers with the 13-story Shorecliff Apartments (1963) by A. Quincy Jones a few blocks south on Ocean Avenue, however, reinforces that Krisel's use of the L-shaped form was innovative. Jones, himself an architect with considerable experience working with merchant-built homes, built a rectangular-shaped building to the maximum setbacks on the lot. Here Jones and his engineer Richard Bradshaw used innovative construction techniques (slip-form concrete construction from commercial buildings) to streamline time and materials. According to Krisel, the slip-form method had been employed for Krisel's office building for Irvin J. Kahn at First Street and C Street in San Diego (1962).[82] According to the *Los Angeles Times* at the Shorecliff, "An average of one full floor was completed every four working days" and the use of concrete for all interior and exterior load bearing walls eliminated the need for columns, beams, wood forming and wood framing. This allowed Jones to create free plans for each floor and apartment unit and achieve construction economies. The Shorecliff Apartments were lauded for applying the system to residential construction and for "…the application of continuous production to a job which had formerly had to be done a bit at a time."[83] However, they did not maximize view, light and privacy for residents.

Krisel's attention to the individual needs of high-rise dwellers, his contribution to the form, and its relationship to his earlier tract home planning and design, can also be seen in his design for another later Ocean Avenue project, Park Plaza (1976). Located right next door to the Shorecliff Apartments, Krisel /Shapiro & Associates' Park Plaza once again utilizes two towers with stepped back volumes maximizing view corridors to the Pacific Ocean and creating a dynamic interplay of space between the two buildings (see Figure 4:38). In this case, unit volumes are rotated and stepped back on both the north and south elevations of the building ensuring, once again, that a majority of units on each floor has ocean views.

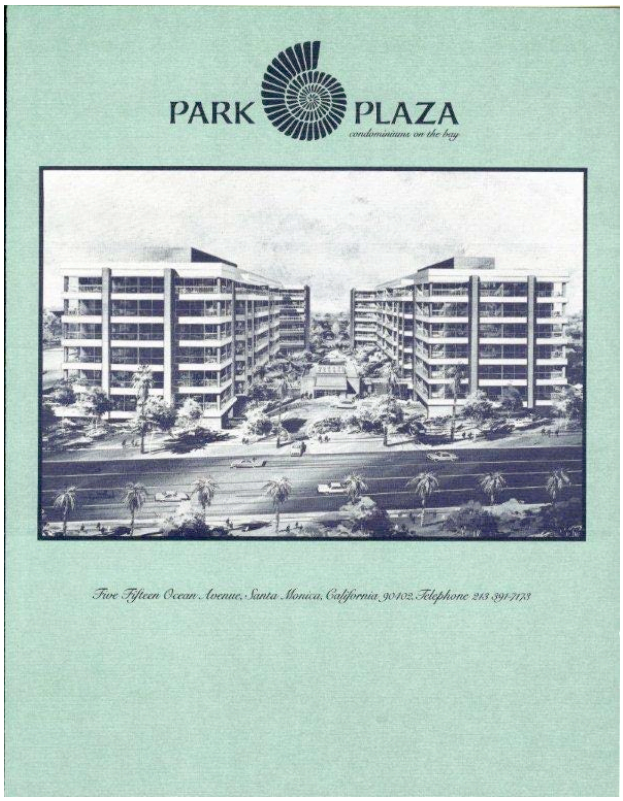


Figure 4:38 Park Plaza sales brochure, circa 1976 shows stepped-back design to maximize view opportunities for condominium units. John Crosse, "William Krisel and George Alexander in Hollywood, 1937-1956." http://socalarchhistory.blogspot.com/2011/01/william-krisel-and-george-alexanders.html

In sum, Ocean Towers is an exceptional example of high-rise design from the late 1960s and early 1970s. It represents the culmination of Krisel's design talent, commitment to avant-garde modern architecture as a vehicle for individual self-expression and quality of life, and a successful evolution in multi-family residential housing product for developers of the period. What began with a dirt-floor studio underneath Schindler's carefully rotated Falk Apartments, blossomed through the sensitive planning of tract developments and culminated with modern high-rise apartment buildings carefully sited for their dynamic interplay of form, light, view and privacy.

A Final Word on William Krisel

Krisel's childhood prepared him well for respecting other cultures and crossing between them. In his adulthood, Krisel proved an effective translator between uncompromising architectural design and merchant building. Krisel's relentless drive, natural curiosity and keen business mind compelled him to learn everything about building so that he could "talk-the-talk" of developers and convince them of the financial benefits of his designs. Understanding those parameters and limitations was actually freeing for Krisel from a design perspective. As Krisel explained, "Individual clients think they know what they want, but they don't. I liked builders because they knew what they wanted. Individual clients come in with a binder of pictures, that kitchen, that hall, and that bedroom and then say 'the rest is up to you.' "[84]

Krisel's architectural contributions are not limited to the tract house, however. As this analysis has shown, Krisel's experience in developing an antidote to the homogenous and faceless postwar tract house served him well as developers turned to

urban alternatives of greater density and empty nesters sought convenience and resort-style living. Recognition that these buildings were a new kind of merchant-built product with ties to the old one resulted in better design; quantity, in fact, led to better quality. Because Krisel understood an American's need for individuality, he applied important principles about siting, personal view corridors, light penetration and flexible living space to high-rises in a way that modern architects associated primarily with commercial office buildings could not.

Yet, the influence of commercial and retail design on Krisel's body of work is substantial. From the early tracts for wary merchant-builders, to the avant-garde Mid-Century Modern designs for more progressive developers, to a new wave of multi-story, multi-family residential projects, Krisel always gave builders and the home-buying public buildings where the show started at the sidewalk and paid off inside with a spatial experience at the highest level of modern living.

[1] Robert Imber and David Shearer, *Visions of Utopia* (Palm Springs, CA: Palm Springs Desert Museum 2004), 13.

[2] Esther McCoy, "What I Believe," *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1956, Q4, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[3] Maggie Valentine, *The Show Starts On The Sidewalk: An Architectural History of the Movie Theater* (New Haven: CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 9.

[4] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[5] Crosse, John. "William Krisel and George Alexander in Hollywood, 1937-1956," http://socalarchhistory.blogspot.com/2011/01/william-krisel-and-george-alexanders.html (accessed July 13, 2011).

[6] *William Krisel, Architect* (2010), DVD, directed by Jake Gorst (Colorado: DesignOnscreen, 2011).

[7] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[8] "Letters," *Time*, November 14, 1938. http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,771997,00.html (accessed July 13, 2011).

[9] Ibid.

[10] Crosse, John. "William Krisel and George Alexander in Hollywood, 1937-1956."

[11] Ibid.

[12] In the film "William Krisel, Architect" he describes his father's disappointed reaction to a report card with four A grades and one B grade as "What happened?" and his father's follow-up reaction to a report card with all A grades as "Now you have to keep it up." He describes his father as one who "…couldn't give a compliment to anyone."

[13] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[14] William Krisel, e-mail message to author, February 26, 2011.

[15] Deborah Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program: The USC Experiment in Architectural Pedagogy, 1930 to 1960," (MHP Thesis, University of Southern California, 2010), 108.

[16] William Krisel, e-mail message to author, May 5, 2011.

[17] Howell-Ardila, "Writing Our Own Program," 178.

[18] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[19] Ibid.

[20] *Exiles and Emigres In Los Angeles Modernist Architecture*, Society of Architectural Historians/Southern California Chapter, 1997, 4.

[21] Crosse, John. "William Krisel and George Alexander in Hollywood, 1937-1956."

[22] Victor Gruen was married to Elsie Krummeck.

[23] Alex Wall, *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona, Spain: Actar-D), 2005, 30.

[24] M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of An American*

Dream (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press), 2004, 72-117.

[25] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Richard Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 1998, 323.

[28] David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *Architecture in Los Angeles: A Complete Guide* (Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, Inc.), 1984, 184.

[29] "Article 41," *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1951, E13. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[30] "Plans for Big Project Are Being Readied," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1956, E7. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[31] "House Built on Six Steel Columns to Be Exhibited," *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1952, 11, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[32] The Hiss residence is attributed to Hiss Associates, the firm of the architect Philip Hiss.

[33] Jean Burden, "Solved…A Hillside Dilemma," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1953, I32, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[34] William Krisel, email message to the author, June 28, 2011.

[35] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[36] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[37] "Development is to be Opened," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1953, E4. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[38] "Throngs View Model Homes," *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1956, F11. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[39] "Firm Building 697 Homes on L.A., Orange County Sites, *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1955, E10, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[40] "Display Ad 124," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1956, E20, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[41] The same year, Palmer & Krisel were also honored with NAHB and HBI Awards for Devonshire Woods, their San Fernando Valley development for Harlan Lee.

[42] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[43] For more on Richard Neutra's ideas about the relationship between science and architecture consult Neutra's own works, *Survival Through Design* or *Nature Near*. Barbara Lamprecht's monograph, *Neutra: The Complete Works*, also provides insight on the architect's ideas about the mental and physiological effects of space.

[44] "Psychologically Planned Homes," *Architect & Engineer*, February 1957, 12.

[45] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] "Here's How Two Young Architects Specialize in Builders' Houses," *House and Home*, May 1956, 174.

[49] "Twist: Rejected By Its Builders, This Well-Planned House Goes On to Win A Top NAHB Award," *House and Home*, March 1957, 138-9.

[50] "11th Home Show," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1956, N1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[51] The Home Show house was significantly altered in order to fit on its West Los Angeles lot, however, it has not been significantly remodeled since is reconstruction on S. Saltair Avenue.

[52] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[53] FHA and VA-insured loans were not the only types of loans available. Lenders offered buyers "conventional financing" with less favorable terms on down payment, interest rate, and fee waivers. Conventional financing also typically required borrowers to have excellent credit, job stability with sufficient income, a sizable down payment, and low debt to income ratios. Some developers such as Alexander and Drogin kept their own loans for deferred profits. As such they were not beholden to FHA Minimum Property Standards that also favored construction methods that added to the construction cost of single-family residences.

[54] As previously discussed, these standards prohibited houses with a flat roof, a butterfly roof or slab on grade construction without a double slab pour and a waterproof membrane between the pours. The latter requirement eased over the years partially through the lobbying efforts of the builders organizations such as the NAHB.

[55] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[56] "About Living," *Living For Young Homeowners*, September 1955, 3.

[57] "Additional Acreage Bought for New Northridge Tract," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1957, F6. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[58] "Home Features Prove Popular," *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1958, G13., http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[59] Powell, Mahin. "How to Win Prizes for Tract Houses," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1959, K40., http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[60] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[61] Graphics often included the logos, sales brochures, and sales office merchandising displays. Including some elements of graphic design as part of servces was common among architects who designed commercial structures, such as coffee shops. For example, John Lautner designed the "Googie" logo for his coffee shop of the same name.

[62] "Architects Name Chief of Interior Design Division," *Los Angeles Times*, December 2, 1956, G6. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[63] Ibid.

[64] William Krisel, email message to the author, July 13, 2011.

[65] The same photos from the Julius Shulman archive at the Getty are labeled "unknown" with respect to architect and location and were not identifiable by William Krisel.

[66] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[67] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

[68] Turpin, Dick. "Work Starts on 850-Home Hillside Development," *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1968, I1. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[69] According to an interview with William Krisel, Krisel helped connect Snyder with Loews when Snyder was looking for financing for the Towers Apartments in Santa Monica. Krisel had attended Beverly Hills High School with Marcus Loew.

[70] Ron S. Heinzel, "Loews Plans $200 Million Housing Venture," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1969, D13. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[71] "Practical Man," *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1966, O1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[72] "Snyder, Lowes Join in New York Venture," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1970, I4. http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[73] Toward the end of their partnership, however, Krisel and Palmer were effectively practicing architecture separately. Krisel opened independent offices in San Diego and West Los Angeles in 1964, as described in the *Los Angeles Times*. According to William Krisel, however, the partnership was not officially dissolved until 1966.

[74] Krisel recalls the Santa Monica Ocean Towers project being initiated prior to the Coronado Shores project.

[75] "For Well-Heeled Empty Nesters: High Rise Condominiums On A Choice Waterfront Site," *House and Home*, September 1972, 80.

[76] "Apartment Towers Rising In Beach City," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1971, K4, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[77] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[78] Although Krisel recalled that the design for the previous owners was by Arthur Froelich and Associates (who received co-credit with Krisel and Shapiro in some media) the 1966 building permit for previous owner J.O. Hogan indicates that the architects were Shaw and Metz, Associates located on Wacker Drive in Chicago.

[79] Although they remained within the maximum height in feet as enforceable at the time, the building code was revised in 1966 to ease height restrictions.

[80] "Towers Win Top Award For Beauty," *Evening Outlook*, May 9, 1973, A10.

[81] "Jumbo Form" concrete construction is not a term that apparently gained widespread usage. An Internet search and interviews with structural engineers from the period and today found these professionals unfamiliar with the term. Well-known structural engineer and sometimes team member Richard Bradshaw was also unfamiliar with the term.

[82] William Krisel, personal interview by author, June 21, 2011.

[83] Tom Cameron, "New Techniques Expand Uses of Concrete," *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 1963, P1, http://proquest.com (accessed May 24, 2011).

[84] William Krisel, personal interview by author, February 2, 2011.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Because of the sheer quantity of their work, architects who worked for developers in Southern California played a significant role in shaping the built landscape than has been previously acknowledged, especially between 1960 and 1973. A closer look at the work of Fickett, Dorman, and Krisel has demonstrated that the quality of their architectural contribution has long been overshadowed and each man, in his own right, contributed to improvements in the quality of life for Southern California postwar homeowners. The following pages explore the implications of these findings for architectural historians and preservationists. The chapter also suggests topics for further study, for it is clear that there is much more research to be done.

For Historians: Rethinking the Relationship Between Commercial and Residential Architecture of A New Generation

Firstly, as the foregoing analysis has demonstrated, there is a rich array of postwar modern architecture beyond that which has become known in recent years. This includes merchant-built and developer housing that does not necessarily have the exterior visual characteristics associated with Modernism. Although elements of Expressionism and avant-garde modern design found their way into the tract houses of the 1950s, Rationalism did not flourish in tract housing until the 1960s. In fact, the decoupling of post-and-beam construction from the post-and-beam aesthetic by architects such as Fickett and Krisel resulted in houses that were modern spatially on the inside, but did not necessarily have an avant-garde modern aesthetic on the outside. This raises even more questions in the current dialogue among historians who struggle to define Modernism, modern architecture, and the condition of modernity.

Secondly, Fickett, Dorman, and Krisel clearly belong to a new, pragmatic generation of modern architects who shared a common set of life circumstances and seminal influences (e.g., World War II, a shift towards practicality in architectural pedagogy, the rise of corporate architecture, and a flourishing retail culture). They represent a departure from the modern architects who came before them because they emphasized the pragmatic aspects of modern architecture over theory. They also emphasized the business aspects of practice. From taking a leadership role in policy and lending practices to creating a one-stop shop for all developer needs, architects like Fickett and Krisel fundamentally changed the rules about tract housing, then built practices specifically designed to efficiently serve their developer clientele. This came at an important crossroads in the profession, when architects like Dorman had to intentionally limit the number of residential projects because they could not make any money on them. Likewise, this came at a time when there was a trend toward greater specialization in the field. Aspects such as design, engineering, landscape design, color selection and planning (which would have all been done by a Neutra or a Schindler three decades prior) became the purview of specialists. Fickett, Dorman, and Krisel built teams; and in the cases of graphics, color-consulting, interior and landscape design, brought these functions in-house to maximize revenue and achieve greater integration between them.

Thirdly, it is important to recognize that all developer projects (merchant-built and otherwise) need to be framed as "products" in order to understand their significance. For a group of developers and merchant builders that unabashedly patterned themselves after the automobile industry, architects for developers had to

focus on both supply-side and demand-side issues relative to their housing designs. For developers, reducing the cost of goods sold was driven by efficiency in plan and materials. On the demand side, this had to be balanced with elements that drove product differentiation, foot-traffic, and sales (e.g., curb appeal, architectural cadence). As a result, the work of these architects is characterized by an incremental innovation and evolution in design that neither succumbed to the monotonous aesthetic of a Levittown nor delivered the "miracle house" so often discussed in the postwar architectural trade publications. It did, however, lead to the commoditization of houses during the 1960s in which owners began upgrading their homes as products to be bought, sold, exchanged and upgraded like an automobile.

Related to this idea of developer house as product, comes the observation that speculative houses should be considered by architectural historians as a unique kind of developer product. Such houses played a pivotal role in the marketing of new subdivisions. From the Space Hut to the Vault Roof House to the Cliff House, these residences were designed as products for sale, but also as a blend of commercial architecture, residential architecture, roadside attraction, and publicity hook for further subdivision parcel sales.

Fourthly, this research has demonstrated that the influence of commercial architecture on merchant-built and developer housing products has been vastly underestimated. While the conventional wisdom has been that tract housing is a dumbed-down version of custom-house design with smaller scale and budget, the work of Krisel and Dorman, in particular, convey otherwise. On the heels of his employment with Victor Gruen, Krisel's early shopping center design features worked themselves

through speculative showcase homes and into his tract house developments with a particular impact on architectural cadence and the automotive streetscape. Dorman's rationalist modern design for tract housing at Huntington Harbour drew directly in plan and materials from his commercial development projects for John Stahl.

Lastly, the tract housing developments of the 1950s exerted their own influence on other building types and later developer products such as the multi-story, multi-family residential building. From his merchant-built projects, Fickett developed a language and palette of materials whose influence trickled outward and upward in his own work. This translated to giving a residential feel to buildings with non-residential uses; from Fickett's Clubhouse at La Costa to his fire station in a hillside neighborhood above Los Angeles. In fact, the challenges of large, mass-produced housing tracts that often sacrificed privacy, individuality and view corridors provided this group of architects a perspective on multi-story, multi-family residential design not enjoyed by architects who lacked extensive experience with merchant builders.

In sum, architectural historians can and should think expansively about what constitutes quality in projects for merchant builders and developers.

For Preservationists: New Contexts & New Criteria For Evaluation

The early 1960s have crossed the threshold for National Register significance and the 1970s are not far behind. That means preservationists are going to increasingly face the challenge of identification, documentation and evaluation of historic resources like large tracts of single family homes, multi-story, multi-family residential buildings, and clusters of semi-attached residences built as townhomes and condominiums. All of these situations necessitate dealing with large groups of owners rather than a single entity.

Often, the more owners involved in district creation, the more difficult it becomes. As the preservation field inevitably shifts to this model, many preservationists are ill-equipped to deal with it. The field must quickly provide the context, education, and evaluation tools necessary to protect these types of historic resources—or many of them will be lost.

First, preservationists have to continue to shift their mindset from being interested in rarity to appreciating multiple. The National Trust's *Preservation Bulletin on Historic Residential Suburbs* was a step in the right direction. However, nearly a decade old since its last revision, it stops short of the 1960s. As the preceding pages have shown, the resort-based residential development of the 1960s is an important context for historic preservation that has not been presently acknowledged. It is critical in Southern California and in sunbelt states like Florida and Arizona. This lack of awareness and appreciation for resort-based residential development has resulted in the fact that La Costa has been remodeled beyond recognition and the majority of homes in Huntington Harbour have been razed for new mansions. Where tract homes remain there, there is insufficient integrity to support any kind of historic district based on architecture.

Another shortcoming of the current *Preservation Bulletin on Historic Residential Suburbs* is the failure to acknowledge the multi-family residential communities that were the new suburbs of the 1960s and 1970s. These projects will face special challenges because they were, in and of themselves, often the result of lost preservation battles and/or the result of questionable urban renewal projects associated with the displacement of low-income urban populations. Projects like Krisel's Ocean Towers or Park Plaza could be in danger of demolition and redevelopment as developers continue

to seek higher-density residential projects in upscale areas. Coronado Shores' integrity has already been adversely impacted by thoughtless additions and alterations. More than just multi-story apartment buildings or low-rise condominiums, they represent an evolution in suburban development.

Secondly, another challenge faced by Southern California preservationists of historic resources built by merchant builders and developers during the 1960s is the fact that these hillside or waterfront developments have become high-value parcels— further encouraging demolition or remodeling. What has already taken place in Huntington Harbour is about to take place in tracts such as Mandeville West and Baldwin Hills Estates. The economics of preservation will become an increasingly important factor in these areas and current preservation incentives often fall short of assisting such property owners. In each of the communities described above, aging original homeowners cannot benefit from incentives (including property tax relief programs such as the Mills Act). Subsequently, many of the last remaining resources with integrity have fallen victims of deferred maintenance and demolition by neglect.

Lastly, as this analysis has shown, often the interior spatial dynamics of these residences are an important aspect of their significance. The decoupling of the post-and-beam method of construction and the post-and-beam aesthetic that began with Fickett and Krisel means that frequently a significant aspect of these resources is invisible from the street. Preservationists should at least be aware of this aspect and consider how the developer resources they are evaluating fit into the continuum that is modern architecture.

In sum, preservationists will have an uphill battle to protect the developer projects of the 1960s and early 1970s unless they are given the tools to do so. These tools, however, will lay important groundwork for the future evaluation of resources from late-twentieth century — when Southern California residential development surged again. In short, this is a preservation condition that is here to stay.

Suggestions for Further Study

This research has also identified several new avenues for further sturdy. Given the prolific careers of the architects profiled herein, there is ample opportunity for additional study of their individual projects. There is also room for additional scholarship on important residential development contexts such as resort-based residential development, marina-based development, and multi-family, multi-story residential development from the 1960s and early 1970s. An area left virtually untouched in this analysis has been developer interest in communities for the aged— a topic of importance not only in Southern California, but across the sunbelt states as well. A review of available literature during this research process also pointed to the need for more scholarship on the development of the quads and townhomes and what, if any, correlation there is between merchant-built tract home planning and these new multi-family residential forms. Scholarship on Welton Becket, A.C. Martin, Charles Luckman, and William Pereira would also be welcome additions to architectural libraries in California and other cities around the United States.

Of course, another important opportunity for research exists in the need for the digitization and creation of a searchable database for the shelter magazines, not just the architectural trade journals. Along the line of the Google Books Library Project, the

digitization of resources from *Sunset*, *McCalls*, *Modern Living for Yong Homemakers*, and the like would contribute to scholarship not only among architectural historians but cultural historians of all interests.

Recent preservation advocacy efforts for historic resources designed by Edward Fickett and Richard Dorman have yielded mixed results, due to the lack of a coherent narrative framework. Because of the strong preservation community in the Palm Springs area, the works of Palmer & Krisel have received more study, recognition, and acclaim but Krisel's work extends well beyond the boundaries of the Coachella Valley. Preservation efforts for Palmer & Krisel will be aided by the architect's recent gift of archival materials to the Getty Research Institute. However, these materials do not include materials from the later Krisel/Shapiro period, which by most accounts, have been lost. A majority of materials from Richard Dorman's Southern California work have been lost in the same manner: by merging, growing, and changing businesses with limited capacity for storage. While the AIA has neither the mission nor the capacity to provide archival services, the organization should be providing counsel and guidance to its members on how to preserve plans and significant correspondence for future study.

In summary, each generation of architects explores the ideas and solves the problems of its times. Only by understanding their touchstones and cultural context can we begin to understand the solutions architects create. Only through in-depth analysis of their work can track innovations and assess the quality of their contributions. The architects who worked for developers in Southern California shaped more acreage of the built environment than all the architects that came before them through both the

quantity and quality of their work. They should be considered a valuable part of the rich array of architecture that composes Southern California.

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