



## **LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT**

**Context: Architecture and Engineering, 1850-1985**

**Sub-Context: Engineering**

**Theme: Technological Developments in Construction**

**Subtheme: Hill Houses, 1920-1985**



*Prepared for:*

City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning  
Office of Historic Resources



July 2017

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTOR</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>THEME INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>HISTORIC CONTEXT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CRITERIA FOR HILL HOUSES</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>37</b>

## **PREFACE**

This sub-theme of Hill Houses, 1920-1985 is a component of Los Angeles's historic context statement, and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to this building type. Refer to [HistoricPlacesLA.org](http://HistoricPlacesLA.org) for information on designated resources associated with this theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

## **CONTRIBUTOR**

Daniel Prosser is a historian and preservation architect. He holds an M.Arch. from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in history from Northwestern University. Before retiring he was the Historic Sites Architect for the Kansas State Historical Society.

## **THEME INTRODUCTION**

The modernist hill house was a product of the automobile and the resulting development of hillside sites. Beginning in the early 1920s the passenger car permitted access to districts in which grades were too steep for streetcar service. Hill houses occupied sites in those districts in which developers left the slopes of the lots intact, rather than grade to create level building pads.

In fitting onto these sites, the hill house broke with the traditional level-lot concept of foundation and superstructure. The level-lot house sat on a discreet foundation that was subordinate to the inhabited space above. The hill house, in contrast, adjusted its foundation to follow the slope, thereby making the foundation an important design element. This required structural experimentation, and modernist architects were particularly adept at taking advantage of these experiments.

Two architectural features accompanied this structural adaptation to a sloping site. The first was the three-dimensional public face of the hill house. The level-lot house typically consisted of a public front, facing the street, and private sides and rear. The hill house, in contrast, often exposed its sides and rear to public view. Its traditional front, along the street, might well be its most reticent face while the downhill rear the most dramatic.

The second architectural feature was the inverted, or upside-down, floor plan. In the level-lot house of multiple stories, the entrance and the primary living spaces were on the ground floor and the more private bedroom areas above. In the hill house, this was often reversed. In order to take advantage of the view the living spaces were on the upper level and the bedrooms below. This inverted plan was particularly common when the entrance was from the uphill side.

Of historic significance, along with these architectural features, was the nature of the clientele. Many of those who commissioned hill houses of modernist design were themselves unconventional. During the 1920s and 1930s they were often members of the cultural avant-garde. Some worked in the arts, while

others were journalists and social reformers. They were often politically on the left and supported experimental living styles. In the period after the Second World War, the client was at least as likely to be a member of the technological elite. Engineers and administrators employed in fields such as aerospace took up residence in the hills alongside the activist artists and writers.

**Evaluation Considerations:**

Properties significant under the Hill Houses theme may overlap with other SurveyLA themes as follows:

- Properties significant for their design quality may also be evaluated under themes within the Architecture and Engineering context such International Style, Early Modernism, and Mid-Century Modern
- Properties may also be significant for their association with noted architects, as the work of a master.
- Properties may be important for their association with the original owners/builders who may be significant in their own right under various themes within the Citywide Historic Context (particularly under local criteria).
- Some example may be significant for their association with the Case Study House program.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

From its early years Los Angeles had to cope with its hills. The common approach was to avoid them and build on flat land. In the few nineteenth-century neighborhoods with sloping terrain, such as Bunker Hill and Angelino Heights, developers created level lots with terracing and retaining walls. The sloping hillsides beyond were left to cabins for those preferring a more rustic life style.<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1900s the streetcar had expanded the city to the base of its more distant foothills. The Santa Monica line of the Pacific Electric ran along the lower slopes of Silver Lake and the Hollywood Hills. The Westgate line served Brentwood with tracks along the median of today's San Vicente Boulevard. To the east of Downtown, the Figueroa Street line ran along the eastern base of Mount Washington, and an inclined railway connected the trolley to the Mount Washington Hotel (L.A. Historic Cultural Monument No. 845).<sup>2</sup>

A few subdivisions, such as Whitley Heights north of Hollywood Boulevard, tried to market hillside lots in these early years. But accessibility required an automobile. Development also required motorized trucks, in place of horse-drawn wagons, to deliver building materials. Both the passenger car and the truck were increasingly common in the years after 1910. But the decrease in civilian construction in 1917 and 1918, during the First World War, meant that the impact of motorized transportation on hillside development had to wait until the building boom of the early 1920s.<sup>3</sup>

We commonly associate living in the hills during the 1920s with the modernist architecture that is the focus of this subtheme. But not all of the era's hillside subdivisions welcomed innovative design. Perhaps the best known of these communities was the Hollywoodland development of 1923, for which the Hollywood sign was originally built. Until the 1940s permissible styles were restricted to historical forms such as French Norman, Tudor, Mediterranean, and Spanish Colonial Revival.<sup>4</sup>

Some of these historicist designs shared features of the modernist hill house. This was particularly true of those that employed the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Like modernist designs, they broke with the traditional relationship of foundation and superstructure. Specifically, they were able to unify the two

---

<sup>1</sup> Rayner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 95; Dominique Rouillard, *Building the Slope: California Hillside Houses, 1920-1960* (Santa Monica: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1999), 2-4

<sup>2</sup> Banham, *Los Angeles*, 96-97; "Lines of the Pacific Electric: Western Division," *Interurbans*, Volume 15, Number 6 (December 1957), 59; "Mt. Washington: Its Hotel and Inclined Railway," Electrical Railway Historical Association, [www.erha.org](http://www.erha.org); William A. Myers and Ira L. Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf: The Story of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway* (Glendale: Interurban Publications, 1976), 76. The Mount Washington Cable Car Station still exists and is L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 269.

<sup>3</sup> Rouillard, *Building the Slope*, 7. Whitley Heights, first subdivided in 1903, is a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). For early subdivision and Post World War I development see "Whitley Heights HPOZ Preservation Plan," 19.

<sup>4</sup> Robert A.M. Stern, David Fishman, and Jacob Tilove, *Paradise Planned: The Garden Suburb and the Modern City* (New York: Monacell, 2013), 78.

through the use of continuous stucco walls. These continuous walls could follow the slope of the lot, and the asymmetric assemblage of masses possible with the Spanish Colonial Revival allowed the house to adjust to the site in a picturesque manner.<sup>5</sup>



*Spanish Colonial Revival houses from the 1920s  
Hollywood Hills  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Nonetheless, the hillside site encouraged modernist design. Dealing with the slope provoked architects to explore innovative structural and planning approaches. At the same time, clients with unconventional ideas chose to settle in the hills and desired to express their advanced social attitudes through building a modernist house.

### **The Pioneers, 1920-1930**

The first modernist hill house is Frank Lloyd Wright's Freeman House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 247), located in Hollywood and completed in 1924. It is one of five houses that Wright designed for Southern California in the early 1920s, the others being the Barnsdall, or Hollyhock, House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 12), the Storer House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 96), and the Ennis House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 149), all in Hollywood, and the Millard House, or La Miniatura, in Pasadena. All five deal with hill sites, either by sitting on top or along the slope. But the Freeman House best exemplifies the qualities of the hill house as a type.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Rouillard, *Building the Slope*, 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> For Wright's work in California in the early 1920s see Thomas Hines. *Architecture of the Sun: Los Angeles Modernism, 1900-1970* (New York: Rizolli, 2010), 120-165.



*Freeman House, 1924*  
*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 247*  
*(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Freeman House is located on Glencoe Way, a few blocks north of Hollywood Boulevard where it intersects with Highland Boulevard coming from the south. The site is steep, sloping downward to the south and east. The surrounding area had been subdivided in the early 1900s, but until 1922 Glencoe Way did not exist. In 1923, when work on the Freeman house began, Glencoe had been graded but still remained unpaved.<sup>7</sup>

The Freeman House has all the elements of the modernist hill house. First, it eliminates the traditional division between foundation and superstructure. Wright used a patterned concrete block of his own design – his Textile Block system – for all the exterior walls. These walls extend from the below-grade poured concrete footings to the roof, eliminating the visual differentiation between foundation and the inhabited space above. By the use of retaining walls of the same material that extend from the house to support outdoor spaces, the Freeman House appears as a set of monolithic forms emerging vertically from the hillside, rather than a series of stacked floors on top of a foundation.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey Chusid, *Saving Wright: The Freeman House and the Preservation of Meaning, Materials, and Modernity* (New York: Norton, 2011), 37-38.

<sup>8</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 28-31.

Second, the Freeman House is meant to be viewed as a three-dimensional object, rather than as a dwelling with a single public face. It is most impressive when seen from below at an angle, as shown in the photograph. From that point it appears as an abstract assembly of sculptured masses interspersed with planes of gridded glass. Its more reticent street elevation, facing Glencoe Way, is a set of closed masonry masses. The front door is hidden from view in a void among these masses.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the Freeman House is an early example of the inverted, or upside-down, floor plan. The combined living-dining room and the kitchen are on the upper level, reached directly from the Glencoe Way entrance, and the bedrooms are on the lower level. Wright had long experimented with placing the living areas above the conventional first floor, and used a variation of the inverted plan in the Millard House in Pasadena, completed a year before the Freeman House.<sup>10</sup>

The Freeman House fits itself into the slope in a manner that became common for early modernist hill houses. A north-south section, taken through the living room and bedrooms, illustrates this. Along the north or street side, the lower bedroom floor beneath the living room is partially embedded into the hillside as a conventional basement. The lower-level north wall retains the grade for half its height, and then fill on top of that, to create a driveway pad at the front of the house. The natural line of the grade intersects the floor of the lower level at the midpoint of the north-south axis.<sup>11</sup>

Beyond this mid-point, the grade resumes its natural slope under the floor. The southern wall of the house continues down beyond the lower-level bedroom floor as a foundation wall to enclose a crawl space. Further to the south, a retaining wall parallel to the rear of the house rises from the grade to create an outdoor terrace. This retaining wall bends at right angles on either end and extends up the slope, to enclose the terrace. These walls contain fill, which rises to the height of the intersection of the grade with the south wall of the house.<sup>12</sup>

Wright's use of his Textile Block system for his continuous walls was technically as well as architecturally experimental. It turned out that the use of the blocks for retaining-wall purposes did not work well. The soil pressure soon caused these walls to bow and crack. Other modernists working on hill houses would rely on the more conventional poured-in-place concrete for such conditions.<sup>13</sup>

The clients, Sam and Harriet Freeman, were part of the cultural avant-garde in 1920s Hollywood. While Sam worked in the jewelry business, Harriet's background was less conventional and included film, theater, and dance. Her sister Leah was married to Philip Lovell, the client for Neutra's Lovell House

---

<sup>9</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 31-32

<sup>10</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 40-42; For the Millard House see Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1942), illustrations 249-254. For an early version of the inverted plan see Wright's 1905 Hardy House, Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, illustrations 112-114.

<sup>11</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 61.

<sup>12</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 61.

<sup>13</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 101-103.



discussed below. Harriet was also close to Aline Barnsdall and familiar with the Hollyhock House. She decided that Wright should design her house as well.<sup>14</sup>

The Freemans used their modernist hill house as a gathering place for avant-garde associates. Harriet conducted a salon in the living room, with its panoramic view of the city to the south, which drew a wide range of actors, writers, artists, and political figures. Sam continued his somewhat more conventional life in the jewelry business and later dealt in real estate. At the same time, he was involved in several liberal organizations and movements, including left-wing theater groups in Hollywood and a leftist bookstore.<sup>15</sup>

The second pioneering hill house is the How House of 1925 (L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 895), located in Silver Lake. (Some sources refer to it as the Howe House.) The architect is Rudolph Schindler, who apprenticed with Wright after training in Vienna where he studied under Otto Wagner. He spent time with Wright at Taliesin and then came to Los Angeles to aid in the construction of the Hollyhock House. Schindler opened his own practice in 1921.<sup>16</sup>

Schindler was also active in the cultural avant-garde of 1920s Los Angeles. His wife, Pauline Gibling, was part of the circle that included Aline Barnsdall, Harriet Freeman, and Leah Lovell. The West Hollywood house that Schindler completed for himself and Pauline in 1922 is indicative of their advanced social ideas. In place of traditional public and private spaces, such as a living room, dining room and bedrooms, the house consists of four separate studios, once each for Rudolph, Pauline, and initially an engineer friend and his wife. All four studios shared a common kitchen, and each had a small roof pavilion for outdoor sleeping.<sup>17</sup>

The How House is one of many Schindler works located in Silver Lake. Like Hollywood, the district dates from the early years of the twentieth century. Its significant feature is the Silver Lake Reservoir which, together with the smaller Ivanhoe Reservoir, was built in 1906-1907. But while the roads around the reservoirs were built at that time, most of the steeply-sloped residential tracts overlooking it came after 1920.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 19-24. Sam was eventually labeled a Communist by the FBI. See Chusid, *Saving Wright*, 23.

<sup>16</sup> Judith Sheine, *R. M. Schindler* (New York: Phaidon, 2001), 11-44, 286.

<sup>17</sup> David Gebhard, *Schindler* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1980), 45-52; Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 245-246.

<sup>18</sup> "Historic Resources Survey Report, Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan Area," SurveyLA.



*How House, 1925 (the garage is at the lower center, in the shadow)*

*L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 895*

*(L.A. Office of Historic Resources)*

The site for the How House is in one of these tracts. It is located on the eastern side of Silver Ridge Avenue, a narrow, winding street which follows a ridge to the east of the reservoir. The lot rises slightly as it extends back from the street and then falls steeply to the east. It also slopes slightly downhill along the street from north to south. The slope allows for a single story facing the street and two stories toward the rear, in the manner of the Freeman House.<sup>19</sup>

As with Wright, Schindler broke with the convention of expressing a separate foundation and superstructure, and treated the How House as an assemblage of masses rising from the sloping grade. But Schindler differed from Wright in two ways.

First, he used two contrasting materials. Cast-in-place concrete makes up the various masses that come into contact with the sloping grade and are extended upward to enclose most of the lower story and portions of the upper. Interlocking with these are contrasting masses covered in redwood siding. This siding features horizontal battens that are spaced at the same sixteen-inch interval as the form lines left in the concrete. The use of these two different, interlocking materials makes for a varied composition, while the aligned horizontals provide overall unity. The unity is reinforced by the use of horizontal mullions at the same sixteen-inch interval for the large corner windows.<sup>20</sup>

Second, Schindler avoided the more traditional frontal symmetry that characterizes the main living room-bedroom portion of the Freeman House. He placed the How House diagonally on the lot, at a forty-five degree angle to the street. This focuses interior attention to the front and rear corner

<sup>19</sup> Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 254; Sheine, R. M. *Schindler*, 47, 116-120.

<sup>20</sup> Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 254; Sheine, R. M. *Schindler*, 47, 104-105, 118.

windows and their views, while on the exterior it allows the house to be viewed as a totally three-dimensional object.<sup>21</sup>

Schindler, like Wright, made good use of the inverted floor plan. The upper floor contains the public spaces, including the living and dining rooms, a study, the kitchen, and an outdoor terrace overlooking the mountains to the east. A portion of the living room ceiling is raised to form a clerestory. The bedrooms along with a single-car garage occupy the lower floor.<sup>22</sup>

The How House fits into its site in a manner similar to that of the Freeman House. The front or western portion of lower level is embedded into the hillside. A crawl space and the garage occupy the excavated western portion of the lower level. The natural grade resumes to the east of the garage, and the rear wall encloses a crawl space below the floor of the lower level.<sup>23</sup>

Particularly skillful is the way in which Schindler places the garage in the less-habitable portion of the lower level, toward the front of the house. He takes advantage of the lower elevation of the street toward the south corner of the lot, as well as the diagonal placement of the house on the lot. That placement turns the wall containing the garage entrance forty-five degrees toward the street, permitting a driveway to connect the two where the street is at its lowest elevation.<sup>24</sup>

The client as well as the architect was unconventional. He was James Eads How, an heir to a railroad fortune who devoted his life to various social causes. While studying in England he became a convert to Fabian socialism, and returned to the United States to found a series of so-called Hobo Colleges for the relief, education and political indoctrination of itinerant workers. Schindler most likely met How and his wife through Aline Barnsdall.<sup>25</sup>

The couple apparently left the design of the house up to the architect. Legend has it that How's only request was a door on the lower level that would permit hoboes in search of a place to sleep to enter directly from the outside. Once the house was finished, How made little use of it. He abandoned his wife in 1928 and took up living with his hoboes. He died of pneumonia two years later while on the road, a death apparently induced by intentional self-starvation.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 116-121. The plan is actually symmetrical about the diagonal front-to-rear axis.

<sup>22</sup> Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 47.

<sup>23</sup> Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 47.

<sup>25</sup> Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 253-255.

<sup>26</sup> Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 253-255.



*Lovell-Health House, 1929*  
*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 123*  
*(L.A. Office of Historic Resources)*

The third of the pioneer hill houses is Richard Neutra's Lovell-Health House of 1929 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 123), located in the Los Feliz section of Hollywood. The clients were Philip and Leah Lovell, both active in culturally radical circles. Leah, the sister of Harriet Freeman, ran a progressive kindergarten together with Pauline Gibling, Rudolph Schindler's wife. Philip was a naturopath, a physician who advocated natural methods of healing and the need for exercise, exposure to the sun, and a vegetarian diet. His financial success came from a column he wrote for the *Los Angeles Times* entitled "Care of the Body."<sup>27</sup>

The Lovells were patrons of modern architecture as well as advanced social movements. By the late 1920s they had commissioned three vacation houses from Schindler. One of these was the Lovell Beach House of 1926 on the Balboa Peninsula in Newport Beach, now considered a modernist classic. It appears that Schindler was initially supposed to design the Los Feliz house. But for reasons that are still debated, the commission went instead to Neutra.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 75-76.

<sup>28</sup> Schindler's removal from the project appears to have been due in large part to the structural inadequacy of the mountain cabin that he designed for the Lovells. The roof collapsed under the weight of the first winter's snow load. Also Lovell was put off by cost overruns and structural deficiencies in the beach house. There is also evidence of personal issues between Lovell and Schindler. See Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 76.

Neutra was a younger contemporary of Schindler. His background was similar, having studied in Vienna, worked for Erich Mendelsohn in Berlin, and then spent time with Wright in Taliesin. Upon arriving in Los Angeles in 1925, Neutra cooperated with Schindler on a number of projects, but professional and personal differences led them eventually to go their separate ways once Neutra gained his license in 1926.<sup>29</sup>

One of the differences seems to have been Neutra's more conventional cultural style and willingness to do what was necessary to maintain a commercially successful architectural practice. Schindler's clientele remained for the most part members of the social and political avant-garde, relatively leftist in orientation, who could provide only small commissions. Neutra, on the other hand, was willing to pursue larger commissions, even if it meant dealing with more conservative, profit-oriented clients.<sup>30</sup>

The site the Lovells had chosen, at the end of Dundee Drive, faces Griffith Park to the north and offers city views to the west and south. The high point of the site is the east boundary adjacent to Dundee. From there it slopes sharply downward toward both the west and south. The house is rotated on the site to take best advantage of the views to the southwest. (The photograph shows the southwestern corner of the house).<sup>31</sup>

The site required a massive foundation. The front portions of the lower and middle levels are embedded into the hillside and employ poured-in-place concrete. In-progress construction photographs show this foundation following the grade in steps (on the right side of the photo, now hidden by foliage). The concrete foundation walls are then pulled back and a series of concrete piers holds up a projecting lower-level terrace by means of a bracket-supported cantilever (the piers are barely visible in the photograph).<sup>32</sup>

On top of this concrete foundation Neutra constructed a light steel cage, making the Lovell House the first completely steel-framed residence in the country. He then filled the bays with ribbon windows and attached continuous concrete-faced spandrel and cornice panels of the same color as the foundation. These panels formed a skin that gave the house its light, machine-like look popular with contemporary European modernists.<sup>33</sup>

The surface projects and recedes in an asymmetric manner, and provides interest to what is essentially a rectangular mass. The result, when viewed from below, is a three-dimensional composition that appears as a series of terraces hovering above the site. Unlike the Freeman or How House, both of which emerge from the slope as heavy, firmly-anchored objects, the Lovell House seems to float above

---

<sup>29</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 9-78, 106-107. Schindler did not receive his license until 1931. See Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 72.

<sup>30</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 69-70.

<sup>31</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 78-79.

<sup>32</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 81-84

<sup>33</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 81-84.

the grade. This appearance has become greater as vegetation increasingly obscures the recessed concrete supports for the first level's cantilever.

The floor plan differs from the inverted plans of the Freeman and How Houses. The Lovell House is essentially a three-story structure. On the lowest level, embedded into the slope at one end and set on the cantilevered concrete base at the other, are utility spaces and, originally, a swimming pool. The middle level, also partially embedded into the slope, contains the primarily public spaces, including the living room, dining room, and a library alcove, as well as the kitchen. The upper level fronts on the street and holds the entrance hall, an adjacent study, and three bedrooms. A dramatic stairway, with double-height windows, connects the top floor entrance hall with the middle level living spaces.<sup>34</sup>

The placement of the bedrooms, rather than the living spaces, on the upper floor seems to have come from the importance of the bedrooms in the lives of the clients. The bedrooms were actually suites, consisting of large spaces called living rooms and smaller adjoining sleeping porches. The study opening onto the entrance hall also had an attached sleeping porch. Apparently providing good views to these suites was of primary importance. The result is that the most dramatic interior space is not the living and dining areas, as with the Freeman or How Houses, but the stairway connecting the upper and middle levels.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Evolution of the Hill House in the 1930s**

During the thirties Neutra, Schindler and Wright remained significant in the development of the modernist hill house. Neutra increasingly refined the exterior as a three-dimensional International Style object. Schindler explored the interior spatial possibilities of the inverted floor plan through the flexibility of light wood framing. At the end of the decade, Wright returned to Los Angeles with a hill house that introduced a radically different approach to the design of the foundation.

The Kun House of 1935-36 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1006) is a good example of how Neutra refined the concept of the hill house as three-dimensional International Style object. The Kun House is located in the Hollywood Hills, approximately three blocks east of Laurel Canyon Road and just two blocks north of Hollywood Boulevard. The site is similar to that of the Lovell House in that the street is along the high point at the northern edge, and the grade slopes steeply down to the south.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 82-83.

<sup>35</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 79-81.

<sup>36</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 140-141. Neutra designed another designated resource during the 1930s that was also placed on a hillside. It is the Sten-Franke House of 1934 in Pacific Palisades (L.A. Historic Cultural Monument No. 647). But the Sten-Franke House does not make dramatic use of its less steep site and more resembles Neutra's level-lot designs. See Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 130-133.



*Kun House, 1935*

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1006  
(L.A. Office of Historic Resources)*

The face that the Kun House presents to the street has been described by one historian as a minimalist gatehouse. It is an abstract composition that contains the garage and entrance hall. The view of the three-story rear, on the other hand, is what the same historian calls “another of Neutra’s happier compositions.” The alternation of ribbon windows and solid bands is an elaboration on the ideas presented in the Lovell House.<sup>37</sup>

The plan is also similar to that of the Lovell House. In addition to the garage and entry hall, the top floor consists primarily of a terrace. A stairway descends from the top floor entry to the living spaces and bedrooms on the middle and lower levels. A top level of mostly open terrace, and the extended balcony of the lowest level, give the Kun House a stepped profile as it descends the hill.<sup>38</sup>

The client, Josef Kun, was native of Hungary and publisher of the *Los Angeles Examiner*. But the house is perhaps best known as the beginning of Neutra’s association with architectural photographer Julius Shulman. Shulman made a casual visit to the house and took snapshots which impressed Neutra. The architect then did what he could to further the photographer’s career. From the late 1930s onward, Shulman did most of Neutra’s photography, and became known as a prominent recorder of Los Angeles modernism.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 140.

<sup>38</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 140-141.

<sup>39</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 140-141; “Kun House,” Los Angeles Conservancy, [www.laconservancy.org/locations](http://www.laconservancy.org/locations). See also Pierluigi Serraino and Julius Shulman, *Modernism Rediscovered* (Cologne: Taschen, 2000).





*Living Room, Van Patten House, 1935  
2320 Moreno Drive, Silver Lake  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Schindler's hill houses from the 1930s were more varied in exterior composition, reflecting his interest in exploring different ways of expressing interior space. One which is notable for its use of the inverted floor plan is the Van Patten House of 1934-1935. It is located at 2320 Moreno Drive, on the western side of the Silver Lake Reservoir. The street runs along the high western edge of the lot, and the grade slopes steeply downward toward the east.<sup>40</sup>

The client, Elizabeth Van Patten, wanted a residence for three women, each requiring a private studio bedroom, together with a shared living space and kitchen. The result is a plan of two linked elements. One is a garage of three staggered single-car bays that is parallel to the street, while the other contains the primary living space and is rotated forty-five degrees, like the How House, to take advantage of the view. The kitchen forms a narrow link between the triple garage and the rotated main mass.<sup>41</sup>

Shaping the house was a requirement of the subdivision that all structures must have pitched roofs. The garages make the most interesting exterior use of this requirement, with each of the staggered three bays having a separate shed roof. The result is the look of a factory saw-tooth. But this requirement

<sup>40</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 142-144; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 161-162. On Schindler's adoption of light wood frame and stucco construction for his hill houses, in place of the earlier concrete and wood siding, see Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 147-148. Other hill houses by Schindler from this period are the 1930 Elliot House in Los Feliz (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 690) and the 1938 Wilson House in Silver Lake (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 965).

<sup>41</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 142-144; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 161-166.



also allows the upper-level living spaces to have sloped ceilings, thereby giving them a degree of drama lacking in the more typical modernist house with its flat roof and ceilings.<sup>42</sup>

Very different from the Kun and Van Patten Houses is Frank Lloyd Wright's 1939 Sturges House in Brentwood (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 557). The Sturges House introduced three architectural features that became common to the postwar hill house. First, it treats the foundation as a separate dramatic element. Second, it employs a single level floor plan in the form of a tray or platform supported by the dramatic foundation. Third, it is clad in the more traditional materials of brick and wood, which will appear on some of the developer-built hill houses of the late 1950s.<sup>43</sup>

George Sturges was an engineer with the Lockheed aircraft company. This in itself is significant, for it marks a shift in the clientele for modernist hill houses, from the cultural avant-garde to professionals in technical fields. While postwar hill houses would continue to attract those of unconventional social and political outlooks, engineers and the scientifically-trained increasingly became patrons.<sup>44</sup>

George and Selma Sturges came across the January 1938 issue of *Architectural Forum*, which was devoted entirely to Wright's work, and decided that he should design their house. They contacted Wright and, according to the architect, stated that they wanted a version of the Jacobs House, his pioneering Usonian from 1937. The Usonian was Wright's term for a small, single-story affordable home. While it employed many modernist devices, from asymmetric massing to a flat roof, it used a traditional material palette of brick and unpainted wood.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 142-144; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 161-162.

<sup>43</sup> Similar to Wright in his use of natural materials was Harwell Hamilton Harris. He designed a notable modernist 1930s hill house in Studio City that today is unfortunately obscured by landscaping. Nonetheless, it deserves mention. This is the Blair House of 1939, located at 3763 Fredonia Drive. Harris apprenticed under Neutra, but his architecture more closely followed northern California modernists such as William Wurster. In plan and section the Blair House is as advanced as any by Neutra or Schindler. It is composed of three pavilions that step up the hillside slope, placed above and behind each other. The lower contains the combination living-dining room and kitchen, the middle a bedroom and the top an artist's studio. The upper and lower levels are perpendicular to the contour lines of the site, while the middle is parallel. The middle level has a deck on the roof of the lower and the upper level a deck on the roof of the middle. Where it differs from the other modernist work is the exterior. Like Wright, it uses natural-finished wood siding rather than stucco or concrete. Like the northern Californians, it has a pitched, rather than flat, roof. The hipped roof has the ridges of the lower and middle levels truncated, like a mansard, to allow for the terraces of the pavilions above. See Esther McCoy, *The Second Generation* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith/Peregrine Smith, 1984), 54-55.

<sup>44</sup> Greg Cerio, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the George D. Sturges Residence" at <https://lamodern.com>.

<sup>45</sup> Cerio, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Making of the George D. Sturges Residence:" Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 614-615.



*Sturges House, 1939*

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 577  
(L.A. Office of Historic Resources)*

Sturges had already purchased the lot in Brentwood, so the single-floor Usonian had to be adapted to a hillside site. The plot is on a bend in the street and sloped upward. The bend allows for a carport at the rear at the same elevation as the living area of the house. The bend also permits a dramatic viewing of the house as a three-dimensional object from the public right-of-way.<sup>46</sup>

The Sturges House somewhat resembles Wright's Fallingwater in Pennsylvania, completed in 1936. A massive brick chimney rises from a brick foundation and anchors the house at its upper edge. Extending back from this is the lightly-constructed carport. Cantilevered from the front of the brick mass is a balconied living space, with horizontally lapped wood siding battered out. A similar half-wall, battered inward, surrounds a roof terrace.<sup>47</sup>

Noteworthy is the means by which Wright holds up the cantilever. A rear-to-front section through the house shows that the joists supporting the floor of the living area and balcony are anchored in the brick mass of the fireplace and rear wall. As the joists extend toward the downhill side, the first portion of the extension is supported by the brick foundation that encloses a shop and mechanical space. The middle portion of the joist extension goes as far as the exterior wall of the living area, and the final portion of the extension supports the balcony.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 614-615.

<sup>47</sup> Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, plates 379-380.

<sup>48</sup> Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, plates 379-380.



*Cantilever support, Sturges House, 1939*  
*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 577*  
*(Photo by Author)*

To hold up this cantilever, Wright installed a row of diagonal wood brackets or struts. They begin about one-quarter of the way in from the corners of the brick foundation, and rest vertically against the upper half of the foundation wall. They extend diagonally upward and end below the living area wall. At this point they support a beam that runs parallel to the front of the house, under the living area wall. This beam extends beyond the row of brackets on both sides as far as the edges of the balcony. It supports all the joists and permits the balcony to cantilever beyond.<sup>49</sup>

By limiting the struts to the center portion of the building, and by using the side-to-side beam supported by these struts to pick up the load of the joists beyond the struts, Wright has created cantilevers on three sides. This allows him to hide the struts in the shadow of the balcony. He further lessens their visual impact by cladding them in the same lapped siding that covers the balcony face. The underside of the balcony is also covered by the same material, thereby concealing the extended joists and the side-to-side beam that supports them.

The floor plan follows the pattern Wright had established for his Usonians. The house is a small single-story rectangular pavilion, made to seem larger by the balconies. A large combination living-dining room and two small bedrooms face the downhill side and open onto the balconies. The living space extends the full depth of the house, from the cave-like fireplace to the French doors overlooking the

---

<sup>49</sup> Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, plates 379-380. The construction is illustrated by a series of diagrams in "Sturges House by Frank Lloyd Wright, Tim Boyle Design," at <http://timboyle.com/sturges-house-by-frank-lloyd-wright/>.

view. Behind the bedrooms are a small kitchen, labeled “workspace” as was typical of Usonians, and a single small bath. The plan is an early version of the single-story arrangement that would become common in the postwar hill house.<sup>50</sup>

### **Hillside Apartments, 1926-1949**

A significant variation on the hill house was the hillside apartment building. Beginning in the mid-1920s and extending into the late 1940s, Schindler designed several multi-family structures for sloping sites, while Neutra produced one in the 1930s that became home to a number of well-known cultural figures. Both architects created stepped assemblages of masses, placing garages on the lowest level adjacent to the street and topping them with living units that climbed the grade behind in a staggered fashion. In constructing these ensembles, both architects employed the relatively conventional method of a concrete foundation that followed the grade and was topped by a wood frame.<sup>51</sup>

The stepped hillside apartment building was not unique to modernists. Neighborhoods such as Echo Park and Silver Lake contain numerous examples of this form from the 1920s which are designed in historicist styles. As with the historicist hill house, the Spanish Colonial Revival was particularly well suited to the stepped apartment building.

Both the modernists and the historicists drew from two sources for these buildings. One was the bungalow court, with its placement of units along a walkway that extended back from the street. The other was the Native American pueblo, with its stepped massing. Schindler spent time during the summer of 1915 in Taos and made numerous sketches and photographs, while Neutra had long been impressed by both the pueblo and the bungalow court.<sup>52</sup>

Schindler’s first hillside multi-family project was the Manola Court/Sachs Apartments (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1118). They are located on the western side of Edgecliffe Drive in Silver Lake, west of the southern end of the reservoir and near the intersection of Sunset and Griffith Park Boulevards. The site slopes up from the street, providing views to the east.

The complex contains three sets of buildings, including some renovated structures, arranged in two rows and built over a period of time between 1926 and 1940. The original section consists of a U-shaped block with a bisecting stairway. The wings of this section appear as two structures as they face the street. These wings step back to form a series of terraces.<sup>53</sup>

---

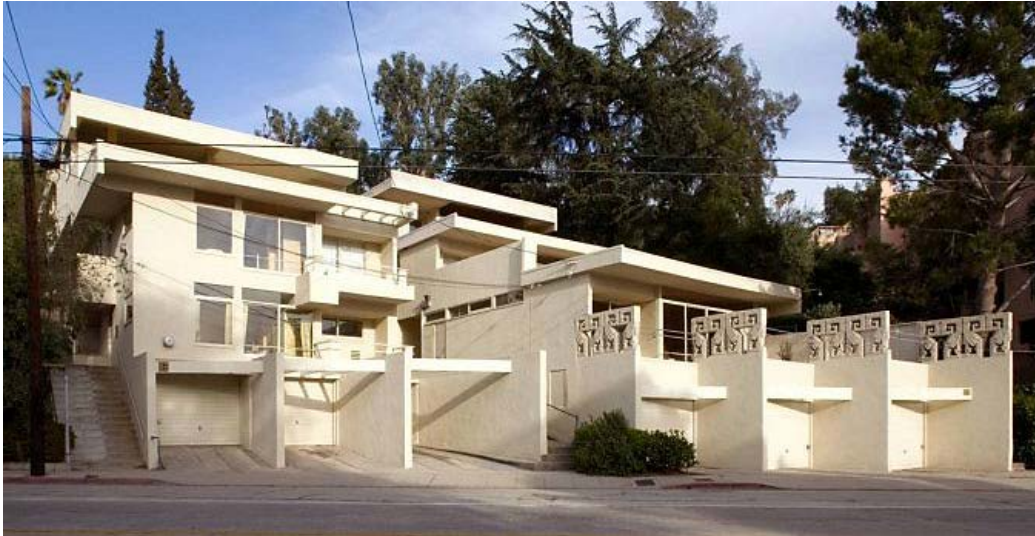
<sup>50</sup> Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials*, plates 379-380.

<sup>51</sup> For Schindler’s use of wood framing for his apartments, see Gebhard, *Schindler*, 75, and Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 165-170. For Neutra’s use of wood framing in the Strathmore Apartments, see Esther McCoy, *Richard Neutra* (New York: George Braziller, 1960), 13.

<sup>52</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 29-30; Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 167-170; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 27.

<sup>53</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 75-76; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 138-141.

The client was Herman Sachs, a painter and decorator who had worked with Schindler on several projects. Sachs is perhaps best known for the “Spirit of Transportation,” his mural at the Bullocks Wilshire department store. The original 1926 building contained his apartment and studio, a spacious penthouse at the rear of the block with north-facing fenestration.<sup>54</sup>



*Bubeshko Apartments, 1938  
2036 Griffith Park Boulevard, Silver Lake  
(Los Angeles Conservancy)*

Nearby in the same Silver Lake neighborhood are two other hillside apartment projects by Schindler. The Bubeshko Apartments are located at 2036 Griffith Park Boulevard and were built in two rows, the first in 1938 and the second in 1940-1941. Because they are readily visible from the street, they illustrate well the stepped form of the modernist hillside apartment.

As with the Manola Court/Sachs Apartments, the Bubeshko Apartments ascend the hillside as distinct masses above garages facing the street. There are three levels of apartment in each of the two rows, reached by way of a center walk with stairs. The stepped-back massing allows the roofs of the lower units to provide terraces for those above.<sup>55</sup>

The other nearby Schindler project is the Falk Apartments (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1133). They are located on a wedge-shaped site at the intersection of Lucille and Carnation Avenues, less than a block from the Manola Court/Sachs Apartments. Constructed in 1939-1940, the Falk Apartments are a complex assemblage of masses that contain portions rotated at forty-five degrees in response to the shape of the lot.<sup>56</sup> The result is a composition that is difficult to comprehend at first viewing. “The

---

<sup>54</sup> Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 249; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 138.

<sup>55</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 164-165; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 166-167.

<sup>56</sup> Gebhard, *Schindler*, 164; Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 168-170.

Falk's four units confirm the architect's affinity for push-pull, up-down dynamics and for playful relationships of indoors and out."<sup>57</sup>

Schindler's final hillside multi-family project is the Laurelwood Apartments in Studio City (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 228). They were built between 1946 and 1949 on a comparatively gentle slope that rises and then falls from front to back. The layout follows that of the Bubeshko Apartment, with rows of units on either side of a central walk. The garages are accessed from the sides rather than the front, providing a solid wall facing the street. Each of the stepped units is rotated fifteen degrees toward the central walkway.<sup>58</sup>

Neutra designed a number of apartment buildings, but only one can be considered a hillside project. This is his Strathmore Apartments of 1937 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 351, listed in the National Register). They are located on a moderately sloping site in Westwood, north of Wilshire between the UCLA campus and the Los Angeles National Cemetery. In contrast to Schindler's work, the Strathmore Apartments retain the more restrained International Style look found in other Neutra's projects from the 1930s, such as the Kun House.

In concept the Strathmore Apartments are much like Schindler's Bubeshko Apartments. The site slopes up from Strathmore Avenue, allowing for the placement of the garages at street level and permitting the living units to be stepped back as the grade rises behind. Placed in two rows on either side of a walkway with steps are two one-bedroom and six two-bedroom apartments.<sup>59</sup>

The Strathmore Apartments became home, at one time or another, to a number of well-known individuals active in the cultural life of Los Angeles. These include film actors Delores Del Rio, Orson Wells and Louis Rainer, the playwright Clifford Odets, designers Charles and Ray Eames, and John Entenza of the Case Study House program. Also living at the Strathmore were the sister and parents of Neutra's wife. Neutra himself owned a half-interest in the property.<sup>60</sup>

### **Individual Hill Houses of the Postwar Years, 1945-1985**

Hill houses after 1945 differ in several ways from those built before the Second World War. These differences are found in both individually commissioned hill houses, examined here, and hill houses built by contractors on speculation, discussed in the following section.

Three changes in particular are significant. First, the postwar hill house was more willing to expose its foundation framing to view, and emphasize the difference between the unoccupied supporting structure below and the inhabited space above. Second, it was more commonly single-story in plan, reinforcing its image as a tray or platform, rather than as a series of masses that fit the slope of the hill.

---

<sup>57</sup> Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 341.

<sup>58</sup> Sheine, *R. M. Schindler*, 217-219.

<sup>59</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 167-174.

<sup>60</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 170-172.

Third, its owner was as likely to belong to the technically trained elite as to be a member of the social and political avant-garde.

Influencing the design of many postwar hill houses was the Case Study House program, which began in 1945 and lasted until 1966. It was supported by *Arts and Architecture* magazine, owned and edited by John Entenza. The program was an effort to encourage modernist residential design through publishing noteworthy examples as Case Studies. During the program's two decades, thirty four Case Study Houses were designed and twenty six built.<sup>61</sup>

*Arts and Architecture* did not commission the houses. Instead, Entenza encouraged architects working in modernist forms to publish their projects as Case Studies. A Case Study house was shown in both design and built form, gaining publicity for the architect as well as the contractor and his material suppliers. In return, the suppliers provided their materials at reduced cost. In exchange for this benefit owners were required upon completion to open their homes for public viewing.<sup>62</sup>

While encouraging modernism in general, Entenza particularly liked prototypes using steel framing. This fit with the program's original identity as a generator of new and possibly more affordable construction techniques, which would bring what had been an elite architecture style to mass housing. There were eventually eight steel frame Case Study houses built, including perhaps the most famous, the Eames House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 381), completed in 1949.<sup>63</sup>

It was this focus on steel framing, and in particular exposing the framing as a design device, that was the significant new influence on the postwar hill house. The hill houses of the 1920s and 1930s stressed volume and mass, rather than articulated structure. Even Wright in his otherwise forward-looking Sturges House concealed his framing in wood cladding.<sup>64</sup>

Two of the architects featured in the Case Study program, Craig Ellwood and Pierre Koenig, were particularly adept at using the exposed steel frame. Of the program's eight steel-framed houses, Ellwood produced three and Koenig two. Each would construct an iconic postwar steel-framed hill house. Koenig's was part of the Case Study Program, while Ellwood's was not.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 507-512. See also Esther McCoy, *Case Study Houses 1945-1962* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977) and Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>62</sup> Neil Jackson, *Pierre Koenig 1925-2004: Living with Steel* (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), 8-9.

<sup>63</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 9.

<sup>64</sup> Schindler experimented with exposed structure in the 1920s, most notably with the concrete frame form his Lovell Beach House. But this was an exception.

<sup>65</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 9. Explored as well were experiments in wood or "pole" framing. See Rouillard, *Building the Slope*, 143-147.





*Smith House, 1955-1958*  
*1095 Kenter Avenue, Brentwood*  
*(Photo by Author)*

The first was Ellwood's Smith House. Craig Ellwood is still a controversial figure. Questions remain as to how many of the designs produced by his office were his and how many came from his talented staff. To some historians he was primarily the affable and well-connected head of the firm who brought in the commissions. Regardless of his role, the office of Craig Ellwood produced a series of stunning houses and commercial structures during the 1950s and 1960s that made expressive use of the steel frame.<sup>66</sup> The Smith House is one of these. Designed in 1955 and built in 1958, Reyner Banham has called it a classic among steel-framed hill houses. It is located at 1095 Kenter Avenue in Brentwood. The site slopes down toward the west from its high point along Kenter, a narrow and winding street extending north from Sunset Boulevard.<sup>67</sup>

The single-story plan is T-shaped and rigidly symmetrical. The top of the T faces the street while the leg extends out over the slope to the rear. Two separate single carports along the street – flat roofed and framed in steel like the house – form an entrance court with steps leading down to the slightly lower entry at the intersection of the T's leg and top. The entrance hall flows on either side of a centrally-

---

<sup>66</sup> Ellwood worked from 1947 through 1949 as a cost estimator for the contracting firm that constructed the steel-framed Eames house. His formal training was limited to seven extension courses in structural design and technical writing at UCLA between 1949 and 1954. Based on his experience and UCLA coursework Ellwood was granted a state certificate as a "Registered Building Designer" in 1964. This allowed him to "engage in the practice of building design" as one "who is a potential candidate for certification as an architect." But he still had to associate with a registered architect for structures that required a stamp. See Neil Jackson, *California Modernism: The Architecture of Craig Ellwood* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2002), 27-28, 42, 44.

<sup>67</sup> Banham, *Los Angeles*, 103-104. The Smith House is near Crestwood Heights, the site of a co-operative housing venture, the Mutual Housing Association, which began in 1948 and featured designs by Whitney Smith and A. Quincy Jones. The Mutual Housing Association Site Office, designed by Jones and Smith in 1948, is L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 680. Seventeen of the original MHA houses are also L.A. Historic-Cultural Monuments. See "Historic Resources Survey Report – Brentwood-Pacific Palisades Community Plan Area," SurveyLA.



placed kitchen, and identical bedrooms with baths flank this entry-kitchen element. Extending toward the rear is the living room and dining room, separated by a free-standing fireplace.

It is this extension that gives the Smith House its significance. The kitchen and bedrooms are anchored to the hillside by a solid foundation. But the living and dining rooms are supported by an exposed steel frame of four-inch H-sections treated as an open three-dimensional grid that extends from the slope upwards to the roof. The superstructure housing the living-dining room takes the form of glass and solid panel infill within the exposed steel frame.<sup>68</sup>

The Smith House gained immediate attention. Five separate journals published articles about it in the first six months of 1960. Even the British *Architectural Review* took note. “Periodically there comes to light a building that – whatever else its other merits – seizes the attention by the way it exemplifies or dramatizes some aspect of modern architecture. Such is the hillside house in California by Craig Ellwood.”<sup>69</sup>

The *Review* went on to put Ellwood’s achievement into historic context. “Here seems to be the ultimate demonstration of modern architecture as an erector toy, a private myth that has lurked not far below the surface ever since the Crystal Palace, and frequently erupted in our own century – most recently, perhaps, in Charles Eames’s own house. But here it reaches an extreme point, the whole structure becomes a neutral space-grid of horizontal and vertical members, with no apparent scale of their own, and the house is made by skimming over the top range.”<sup>70</sup>

The second of the iconic steel-framed postwar hill houses is Pierre Koenig’s Stahl House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 670). Koenig’s training and apprenticeship were more conventional than Ellwood’s. He took his architectural degree from USC and then worked for Rafael Soriano. Soriano was a pioneer in the use of steel framing for single-family homes, and had four under construction or design during Koenig’s time in his office. Koenig gained his license in 1957 and then embarked on a career that combined work as a sole practitioner together with teaching at USC.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Jackson, *California Modernism*, 80.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Jackson, *California Modernism*, 80.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Jackson, *California Modernism*, 86

<sup>71</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 7-8, 11, 14. Among Soriano’s work are the Shulman House of 1950 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 325) and the 1964 El Paradiso (L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 638).



*Stahl House, 1959-1960*  
*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 670*  
*(Los Angeles Conservancy)*

Koenig built two steel-framed Case Study Houses, both of which are designated.<sup>72</sup> His first was the Bailey House, a level-lot project completed in 1958 (L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 669, listed in the National Register) and identified as Case Study House Number 21. The second was his hillside Stahl House, completed in 1960 and identified as Case Study House Number 22 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 670, listed in the National Register). Located on Woods Drive in the Hollywood Hills, north of the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Sweetzer Avenue, it is best known for Julius Shulman's nighttime photograph of the city's lights viewed from the living room.

In plan the single-story house is L-shaped. The long leg is parallel to the street, with a carport at its end, and contains the bedrooms and bathrooms. The face of this long leg along the street is without openings of any kind. The only relief is a grid of exposed steel columns that divides it into three equal bays, each filled in with corrugated steel roof decking used as cladding.<sup>73</sup>

Access to the house is through the carport and along the rear deck, enclosed by the house on two sides and featuring a swimming pool. Extending from the base and perpendicular to the street is the short leg of the L containing the living room and the combination dining room-kitchen, divided by a free-standing fireplace. All three sides of this space are glass.<sup>74</sup>

This glassed-in space appears from the rear deck to be suspended over the side of the hill, giving the house its visual drama. Actually, only about a quarter of the living room wing is cantilevered. Ironically, given the importance of exposed steel framing in the house's design, the supporting foundation frame is

<sup>72</sup> A number of Case Study Houses have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places under the Multiple Property Nomination, "The Case Study House Program, 1945-1966," 2013.

<sup>73</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 42-49.

<sup>74</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 42-49.

concrete. Concrete caissons extend thirty-five feet into the hillside, upon which rest thirty-inch deep reinforced concrete beams supporting the cantilever.<sup>75</sup>

Steel is significant, however, in providing the Stahl House with its light, transparent appearance above the foundation. The house is based on a twenty-foot grid, using four-inch H-sections as columns and twelve-inch I-section beams. The roof deck is a relatively shallow five inches, allowing for it to appear as a thin edge. Most significant are the deep overhangs provided by extending the I-section beams beyond the columns and planes of glass.<sup>76</sup>

Shulman's evening photograph from the Stahl's living room has become one of the images of Los Angeles that identifies the city in the mind of visitors. British architect Norman Foster made note of "the heroic night-time view of Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22 which seems so memorably to capture the whole spirit of late twentieth-century architecture. There, hovering almost weightlessly above the bright lights of Los Angeles, spread out like a carpet below, is an elegant, light, economical and transparent structure whose apparent simplicity belies the rigorous process of investigation that made it possible. If I had to choose one snapshot, one architectural moment, of which I would like to have been the author, this is surely it."<sup>77</sup>

The clients, Carlotta and C. H. "Buck" Stahl, are representative of the wider audience for modernist hill houses in the postwar period. Buck Stahl was a purchasing agent for Hughes Aircraft and had previously been a professional football player. The couple bought the lot, considered by many as unbuildable, at first sight, and then began looking for an architect who would undertake the commission. They had previously seen pictures of Koenig's work and were sympathetic to his ideas. Koenig later noted that it was the Stahls who specified a structure that would allow for an unobstructed view in three directions.<sup>78</sup>

Not all individually commissioned postwar hill houses drew from the Case Study aesthetic. The work of one dissenting architect in particular deserves mention. He is John Lautner, who began his career as an apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright. He studied at Taliesin and then oversaw construction of the Sturges House. Later he worked for Douglas Honnold and, during that time, has been credited for inspiring the flamboyant coffee-shop style later known as Googie.<sup>79</sup> By the late 1940s Lautner began exploring what one historian has called "provocative solutions to single-family dwellings on hilly suburban sites."<sup>80</sup>

Two of Lautner's hillside houses are designated resources. The first is the often-illustrated Malin or Chemosphere House of 1961 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 785). Leonard Malin was an aircraft

---

<sup>75</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 46. Unlike most hill houses, the Stahl House is rarely photographed from below.

<sup>76</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 45. Interestingly "Stahl" is the German word for steel.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 544.

<sup>78</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 43; Barbara Thornburg, "Koenig's Case Study House No. 22 as a Home," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 2009.

<sup>79</sup> Barbara Campbell-Lange, *John Lautner, 1911-1995: Disappearing Space* (Cologne: Taschen, 2005), p. 9; Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 614-615. 619-622.

<sup>80</sup> Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 624.

electronics engineer and familiar with Lautner's work. The site is located high in the Santa Monica Mountains, off Mulholland Drive to the east of Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The lot, a gift from Malin's father-in-law, was considered unbuildable because of its almost forty-five degree slope and limited access to the road below.<sup>81</sup>



*Malin/Chemosphere House, 1961*  
*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 785*  
*(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Malin was closely involved in the work on the house and took a year off from his engineering job to oversee construction. The foundation structure consists of a five-foot diameter concrete column, twenty-seven feet high, rising from a pad footing. A two-foot-diameter void in the center of the column allows for the passage of utilities.<sup>82</sup>

The floor of the single-story dwelling is a steel and lightweight concrete octagon, supported by eight struts. The edge of the floor is turned up at the same angle as the struts to form a continuous windowsill. The struts continue within the upturned floor to the level of the sill. Resting on these

---

<sup>81</sup> Alan Hess and Alan Weintraub, *The Architecture of John Lautner* (New York: Rizzoli/Universe, 1999), 89-90; Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 632.

<sup>82</sup> Hess and Weintraub, *Architecture of John Lautner*, 89-90; Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 632. The structural engineer was John de la Vaux. See Hines. *Architecture of the Sun*, 634.

continued struts are eight laminated wood beams that curve down at their ends to form a shallow dome. At the center of the dome is a compression ring that allows for a skylight.<sup>83</sup>

The approach to the house also required innovation. Its only access to the street is by way of a long, narrow, and steep strip of land leading downhill from the house. Lautner placed the carport at the street and then constructed a funicular that travels to a small deck behind the house. A bridge connects the deck to the dwelling.<sup>84</sup>

More conventional, and in many ways a return to the forms of the 1920s, is the second of Lautner's designated hill houses. This is the Wolff House of 1963 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 852). Marcus Wolff was an interior designer and specifically asked for a house in the spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>85</sup> One historian has described the Wolff House as taking Wright's idea of engaging with the site and introducing angles and rotations that coincided with Lautner's own inclinations.<sup>86</sup>

The house is located in the Hollywood Hills, a few blocks north of Sunset Boulevard above its intersection with La Cienega Boulevard. The site is a long, narrow lot that extends from its high point on Hedges Place to a low point along Miller Drive. The arrangement of the house consists of a carport at the upper level along Hedges Place, a passage through a garden, and then an entrance foyer. At that point a stairway descended into a double-height living room. Adjacent to the living room are the dining area, kitchen, and a den. A master bedroom suite occupies the level below.<sup>87</sup>

A section through the Wolff House shows its resemblance to Wright's Freeman House and Schindler's How House. The grade falls off steeply from the street. The rear wall of the middle, or living room, level intersects the natural grade at a point that is equivalent to one story below the level of the street. The carport and garden levels rest on fill that is supported by this wall. The rear wall of the lower, or bedroom, level also intersects the natural grade, at a point that is approximately midway back-to-front along the middle level above, making the lower level about half the size of the middle level.<sup>88</sup>

At this point, the original grade of the site had been covered with fill. It was this fill, as much as the steepness of the site itself, which made the lot unbuildable in the opinion of many. Lautner dealt with this by sinking caissons through the fill until they reached bedrock. The rear wall of the house and wall of the balcony-terrace beyond both rest on these caissons.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Hess and Weintraub, *Architecture of John Lautner*, 90; Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 632.

<sup>84</sup> Campbell-Lange, *John Lautner*, 45; Hines, *Architecture of the Sun*, 632.

<sup>85</sup> Hess and Weintraub, *Architecture of John Lautner*, 94.

<sup>86</sup> Campbell-Lange, *John Lautner*, 51.

<sup>87</sup> Frank Escher, editor, *John Lautner, Architect* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1998), 126; Hess and Weintraub, *Architecture of John Lautner*, 111.

<sup>88</sup> Escher, *John Lautner, Architect*, 127.

<sup>89</sup> Escher, *John Lautner, Architect*, 125, 127.



*Wolff House, 1963*

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 852  
(L.A. Office of Historic Resources)*

The view of the house from Miller Drive shows an assembly of stone verticals and metal-clad horizontals, topped by a projecting roof eave. Here the influence of Wright is evident. Original materials were a copper-clad standing seam roof with plastered soffits and stone facing on the underlying steel frame. It is from this viewpoint that the link to earlier hill houses is evident. The Wolfe House is multi-storied and firmly rooted to the slope, rejecting the common postwar image of a single-story platform supported by an open frame.<sup>90</sup>

### **Hill Houses by Developers in the Postwar Years**

From the late 1950s through the mid-1960s several developers explored the possibility of creating tracts of hill houses to be sold on speculation. These spec-built hill houses – popularly referred to as stilt or platform houses – generally followed the pattern established by Craig Ellwood’s Smith House, with an exposed frame supporting the living space. Unlike the Smith House, however, there was little attempt to integrate the lower frame and the upper dwelling into a single visual entity. Banham described the approach as one that “simply takes a standard developer’s tract-house and perches it in mid-air on steel uprights, a surreal image of plainsmen’s houses apparently airborne and detached from earth . . . .”<sup>91</sup>

The sites for these spec-built hill houses were in areas somewhat distant from the traditional hill house neighborhoods of Silver Lake, Hollywood, and Brentwood. Two sections of the city in particular were

<sup>90</sup> Hess and Weintraub, *Architecture of John Lautner*, 94, 109.

<sup>91</sup> Banham, *Los Angeles*, 104.

popular among developers. One was Sherman Oaks-Studio City area, overlooking Cahuenga Pass and the San Fernando Valley. The other was Northeast Los Angeles, particularly the neighborhoods of Mount Washington and Montecito Heights.



*Boathouse Thematic Group, 1959*  
*Pacific View Drive and Woodrow Wilson Drive, Cahuenga Pass*  
*(SurveyLA)*

There are three notable developments in Sherman Oaks-Studio City area identified through SurveyLA. The first is the Boathouse Thematic Group, located in the hills overlooking the Cahuenga Pass. This grouping was constructed in 1959 and is composed of twelve identical single-family residences occupying steep, narrow hillside lots and lining multiple discontinuous segments of Woodrow Wilson Drive and Pacific View Drive. The lots are small, averaging 35 feet wide by 95 feet deep along Pacific View Drive and 25 feet wide by 90 feet deep along Woodrow Wilson Drive.

Each of these compact residences is set close to the street, with an open carport that shelters the main entrance. With the hillside descending steeply toward the rear of the parcels, each residence is perched upon pier supports. The canyon-facing façades reveal two stories of occupied space, the upper level of which is enclosed with floor-to-ceiling glass. Other features include truncated gable roofs with deep overhanging eaves on the canyon side, unpainted wood siding on angled side walls, and a full-width upper story balcony. Of the 12 residences, only one has undergone extensive alterations.

The rustic design, rare for hill houses, came from self-taught architect Harry Gesner. Gesner was known for his inventive, expressionistic residential form, with many of his commissions located in the coastal community of Malibu. The Boathouses gained their name from the employment of Norwegian shipbuilders to assist in construction.

The lots were originally subdivided in 1911. But the challenge posed by their small size and hillside topography discouraged development. It was not until the mid-1950s that landowner Ronald Buck contacted Gesner to ask for advice on how to build on the hillside lots he had purchased.<sup>92</sup>

The Bridge House Residential Historic District was also identified through SurveyLA and is also located in the hills overlooking the Cahuenga Pass. The district consists of six identical residences on the east side of Valevista Trail, an ascending hillside road. They were constructed in 1960 by landowner and developer Julian Lesser and by Ronald Buck, who had earlier constructed the Boathouse Thematic Group.

The Bridge Houses occupy narrow hillside parcels measuring 25 by 100 feet. Each is a compact dwelling of one story, measuring just over 750 square feet. Set close to the street, the residences display wood-frame open carports, which shelter the main entrances. With the hillside descending steeply toward the rear of the parcels, the residences are perched on pier supports. Other features include exposed post-and-beam construction, with flat roofs and unpainted wood siding.

No architect has been identified, but the structural engineer was Patrick Fretto, the president of the San Fernando Valley chapter of the California Society of Professional Engineers. As with the Boathouse development, the Bridge House lots were originally subdivided in 1911. But here too the challenge posed by their small size and hillside topography discouraged development until 1960.<sup>93</sup>

The third and best known of the Sherman Oaks-Studio City area developments identified by SurveyLA is the Platform House Residential Historic District. It consists of 14 unaltered single-story houses constructed between 1962 and 1966. They are located along a short stretch of Oakfield Drive, a winding hillside road near Mulholland Drive in Sherman Oaks. Although these parcels were first subdivided in 1927, the land remained unimproved until the 1960s.

The 2000-square-foot houses are suspended over the canyon, resting on steel platforms which are supported on a system of diagonally-braced steel poles set in concrete footings. The residences sit close to the sidewalk and span nearly the full width of their lots. The street-facing facades are plain, sometimes windowless, while canyon-facing facades exhibit large banks of windows that capture panoramic view of the surrounding hills and the San Fernando Valley beyond.

---

<sup>92</sup> Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass Community Plan Area, 'Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources Report,' SurveyLA.

<sup>93</sup> "Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass Community Plan Area, "Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources Report," SurveyLA.





*Platform House Residential District, 1962-1966  
Oakfield Drive, Sherman Oaks  
(SurveyLA)*

The subdivision was developed by the Stone Fisher Construction Company, with homes designed by Richard Neutra and structural engineer Art Levine. Promotions for the tract described Neutra as “one of the world’s foremost architects,” and noted the uniqueness of the tract, which offered “a limited number” of homes “for aware people.” But, despite the reputation of the architect, the relatively large size and high visibility made the Platform Houses symbolic of the type for critics such as Banham.<sup>94</sup>

The hillside neighborhoods of Northeast Los Angeles have not received the same degree of attention as those further to the west. Nonetheless they gained a fair share of hillside houses in the years after the Second World War. Of particular importance are the neighborhoods of Montecito Heights and Mount Washington.<sup>95</sup>

Recorded as part of SurveyLA, a notable development of spec-built platform houses is the Montecito Drive Residential Historic District, constructed between 1961 and 1964. It is located along a stretch of hillside on Montecito Drive in Montecito Heights. The topography is hilly, with Montecito Drive charting a winding course along the crest of the slope.

The houses occupy narrow, steeply-sloped lots and are suspended over a canyon, resting on steel platforms which are supported on a system of diagonally-braced steel poles. The residences have

---

<sup>94</sup> Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass Community Plan Area, “Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources Report,” SurveyLA.

<sup>95</sup> One notable individual example is 1146 North Olancha Drive on Mount Washington. It was designed and built by engineer John Ott in 1961. The house is Mid-century Modern in style and is an example of a platform house adapted to a steep site. See Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area, “Individual Resources Report,” SurveyLA.

uniform, shallow setbacks from Montecito Drive and span the full width of their lots. Street-facing facades are dominated by one- and two-car garages or carports and entrance courtyards.



*Montecito Drive Residential Historic District, 1961-1964  
Montecito Drive, Montecito Heights  
(SurveyLA)*

The style of the 23 intact dwellings within the district is predominantly Mid-Century Modern. Common elements include rectangular plans, unadorned walls, and wood siding with minimal fenestration on the street-facing facades. One-story models feature flat or low-pitched roofs, while two-story models are covered by gabled roofs.

The district was originally part of a larger tract known as Montecito Park, subdivided in 1908. But because of the steepness of the terrain, the south side of Montecito Drive remained vacant into the 1950s. Residences within the district were constructed by the Montecito Construction Company and designed by John Pugsley or Richard Kearney.<sup>96</sup>

Mount Washington was the location of one of the last of the hill house spec developments. The SurveyLA-identified Mayo Street Residential Historic District is a group of six intact dwellings constructed in 1965 and located along a short stretch of Mayo Street. The street forms a small loop extending from the northern end of San Rafael Avenue, near Terrace 49.

The topography of the district is hilly and adheres to an irregular, curvilinear street grid, with Mayo Street featuring a moderately downward slope to the northwest. The two-and-three-story residences occupy modest-sized steeply sloped lots, with the upper story at the street level and lower levels

---

<sup>96</sup> Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area, "Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources," SurveyLA.

cantilevered over the slope of the hillside. The street-facing facades are dominated by carports and small entrance courtyards.

The style is predominantly Mid-Century Modern. Common elements include dramatic rooflines, unornamented primary facades of vertical board siding or stucco, simple entries, and large windows. The houses were designed by Richard Kearney, who contributed to the design and construction of other hillside residences in the area. The developer appears to have been Elevations, Inc.<sup>97</sup>

### **The Hill House after the mid-1960s**

By the late 1960s the hill house as a type had lost popularity. This can be attributed to decreasing interest in Mid-Century Modernism, a style commonly associated with the hill house, and to changing regulations that discouraged the open underside of the platform house.



*Gantert House, 1983*  
*6431 West La Punta Drive, Hollywood*  
*(SurveyLA)*

There is, however, a final example of the modernist hill house which merits attention. It dates from the early 1980s, just after the end of SurveyLA's period of focus, but deserves study, in that it includes all three of the hill house's architectural features – an innovative foundation, an exterior designed to be seen in three dimensions, and an inverted plan.

---

<sup>97</sup>"Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area, "Historic Districts, "Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources Report," SurveyLA. Addresses of unaltered dwellings are 945, 947, 949, 953, 957 and 965 North Mayo Street.

This is Pierre Koenig's Gantert House of 1983. It is located at 6431 La Punta Drive in the Hollywood Hills, several blocks to the northeast of where Highland Avenue, Cahuenga Boulevard and the 101 Freeway meet to enter Cahuenga Pass. The lot is at a bend on La Punta Drive, from which it slopes down steeply to the west and south.

The Gantert House is a two-story steel-framed square, with the upper level extended as a deck toward the street to provide a driveway serving the carport. The carport consists of three equal bays classically proportioned, the two flanking bays housing the cars, and the center bay serving as a path to the entrance. The mass of the house sits behind this with the area under the carports originally left open (it was later enclosed).<sup>98</sup>

This mass is supported by a two-way cantilever projecting from a central core. This core consists of four eight-by-twelve-inch steel H-section columns resting on concrete caissons driven deep into the hillside. The original floor plate that cantilevers from this core measured 36 by 35 feet at the lower level and 36 by 45 above to include the extended carport deck. A grid of eighteen-inch I-section beams supports the cantilevers.<sup>99</sup>

The inverted floor plan continues the classical symmetry of the carports and entry passage. The entrance is placed at the center of the mass, and the stairway leading down to the bedrooms faces the entry door on this front-to-rear axis. The roof is raised above the entry and stairway along the axis to create a front-to-rear clerestory. The upper level is treated as a pavilion around the stairwell, with the living area to one side and the dining and kitchen to the other. The kitchen was originally screened by partial height partitions, but these partitions were later removed by new owners, under the supervision of Koenig, to create an entirely open upper level.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 76-79.

<sup>99</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 77.

<sup>100</sup> Jackson, *Pierre Koenig*, 78-79.

## CRITERIA FOR HILL HOUSES

<b>Summary Statement of Significance:</b>	Hill houses are significant in the areas of Engineering and/or Architecture as excellent examples of single and multi-family residences designed and engineered to adapt to the terrain and build sites. Hill houses made use of innovative construction techniques, exterior forms, and interior floor plans that fit the conditions of the sloping sites they occupied. The houses were generally designed by well-known architects of the period and were often built by members of the cultural avant-garde who wished to reflect their advanced views through the modernist design of their dwellings. Hill houses represent some of the most iconic and architecturally significant buildings in Los Angeles and are closely associated with the modernist movement.
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	1920-1985
<b>Period of Significance Justification:</b>	The period of significance begins in 1920, when widespread ownership of automobiles made hillside sites accessible. It ends in 1985; after Pierre Koenig's designs in the 1980s the number of hill houses built began to dwindle.
<b>Geographic Location:</b>	In the hill districts of the city, particularly Silver Lake, the Hollywood Hills, Brentwood, Studio City-Sherman Oaks, Mount Washington, and Montecito Heights.
<b>Area of Significance:</b>	Engineering; Architecture
<b>Criteria:</b>	NR: C              CR: 3              Local: 3 <b>Note:</b> Some examples associated with the Case Study House program may also be significant under Criterion A/1/1 in the area of Social History. Some examples may also be significant under Criterion C/3/ for their association with noted architects as the work of a master.
<b>Associated Property Type:</b>	Residential/Single Family Residence Residential/Single Family Historic District Multi-Family Residential/Apartment Building
<b>Property Type Description:</b>	Hill houses were designed to fit the sloping nature of specific sites. Individual examples may be single-family residences or apartment buildings. Historic districts or thematic groups contain hill houses built on speculation by developers.



**Property Type Significance:**

See Summary Statement of Significance above.

**Eligibility Standards:**

- Was built or developed within the period of significance
- Is an excellent example of a residence, apartment building, or group of residences designed and engineered to adapt to the terrain and build sites

**Character Defining/Associative Features:**

- Individual buildings and districts (as a whole) retain the essential character-defining feature from the period of significance
- Buildings should adapt to the terrain, through design and engineering ,rather than the terrain altered to accept the structure
- Characterized by use of stepped foundations, cantilevers, visible supporting beams and/or stilt-like columns
- Characterized by use of modern materials, such as steel and concrete, as well as large expanses of glass
- Typically also significant under a theme/style related to L.A. Modernism
- Typically designed by noted architects and designers
- Original owners/builders may be significant individuals within Los Angeles history
- Districts are characterized but narrow, winding street, often without sidewalks and curbs
- For the National Register a property/district must possess exceptional important if less than 50 years of age

**Integrity Considerations:**

- Should maintain integrity of Location, Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, Setting, and Association
- Contributors to a district may have a greater degree of alterations than individually significant properties
- Surrounding landscape should retain original slope

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

Campbell-Lange, Barbara-Ann. *John Lautner, 1911-1995: Disappearing Space*. Cologne: Taschen, 2005.

Chusid, Jeffrey. *Saving Wright: The Freeman House and the Preservation of Meaning, Materials, and Modernity*. New York: Norton, 2011.

Frank Escher, ed. *John Lautner, Architect*. New York: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Hines, Thomas. *Architecture of the Sun: Los Angeles Modernism, 1900-1970*. New York: Rizolli, 2010.

Hines, Thomas. *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Gebhard, David. *Schindler*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1980.

Hess, Alan, and Alan Weintraub. *The Architecture of John Lautner*. New York: Rizolli/Universal, 1999.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *In the Nature of Materials: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright*. New York: DaCapo Press, 1942.

Jackson, Neil. *California Modern: The Architecture of Craig Ellwood*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.

Jackson, Neil. *Pierre Koenig, 1925-2004: Living with Steel*. Cologne: Taschen, 2007.

Rouillard, Dominique. *Building the Slope: California Hillside Houses, 1920-1960*. Santa Monica: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1999.

Sheine, Judith. *R. M. Schindler*. New York: Phaidon, 2001.