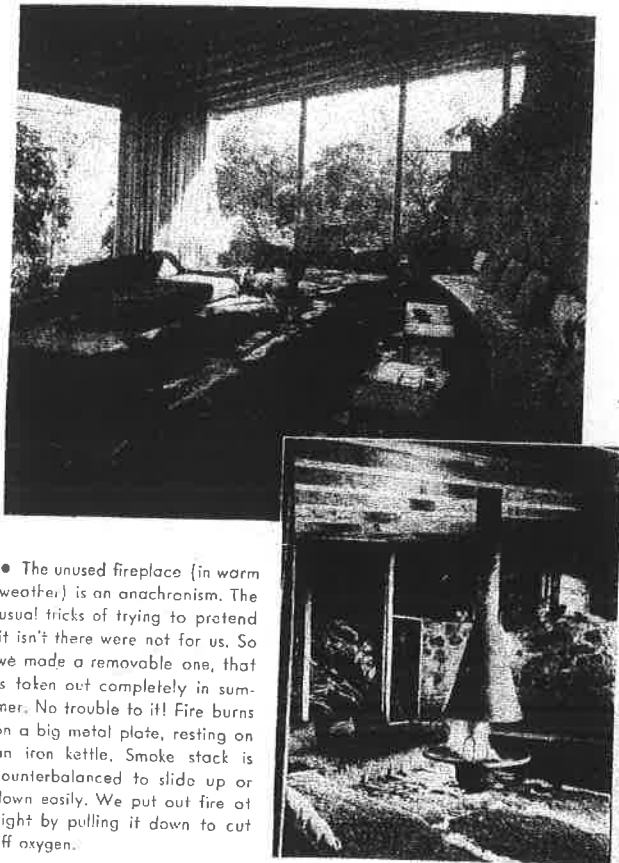




• The unused fireplace (in warm weather) is an anachronism. The usual tricks of trying to pretend it isn't there were not for us. So we made a removable one, that is taken out completely in summer. No trouble to it! Fire burns on a big metal plate, resting on an iron kettle. Smoke stack is counterbalanced to slide up or down easily. We put out fire at night by pulling it down to cut off oxygen.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAYHEARD PARKER

The rewards of knowing what you want

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 116

but tell us honestly. How is it to live in? What would you do differently if you were to do it over again?"

The only change we would make would be to install radiant heating rather than hot air. As it was, we used a gas floor furnace, and we got that only by chance. At the time there was absolutely no pipe available for radiant heating, and as a matter of fact, I stole most of the water piping from my parents' poultry ranch a few miles away. Like most of our materials, it was bent, bruised, and battered, but we were happy to get it.

Even though there is a five-and-half-foot difference in floor levels in our house, the little gas floor furnace in the lower level provides us with enough heat. Moreover, there's always the fireplace in the

living room to supply additional warmth in the very infrequent cold snaps of San Diego.

Within all parts of the house, you can always get an interesting play of light and shade, and to us that's more important than a built-in sun lamp in the bathroom. If there's any sun outside, it's always visible without glare throughout our interior, largely because our largest windows face north.

Being below grade, one looks up and out on three sides through flowers and shrubs. At times masses of greenery are lushly translucent with the sun seen through the leaves. The daylight everywhere is pleasant for work and relaxation, and the central skylight spreads a lovely sub-aqueous glow of light over everything.

During the summer months you

can step in out of the heat and enjoy the cool half-light under the big roof. It's something like being under a large spreading tree because you're in the shade and yet you can see out in all directions. The doors and windows are so located that the natural flow of cool ocean breezes enters at the low level and, following up the slope of the roof, empties out at the high level, taking all the hot air with it. There are 300 square feet of openable doors and windows in the main house alone. Some of these have fixed screens, some free-hanging plastic screens, and some are unscreened, which is all right too, because we are bothered with relatively few flies and mosquitoes in this area.

The keynotes of living in "Il Cavo" are freedom of movement and informality of function. Ours is perhaps the only house intentionally built with the Bendix and ironing board in the entrance hall.

The kitchen, laundry, dining room, stairhall, breakfast room, sitting room, and takanemo are all one space. And they open out onto the entrance dining-terrace through 12 feet of doors. From the kitchen one can see all over the house

through the plate-glass screen.

From the bedroom, our living room, the valley, and the study are also visible, although they can be shut out by simply pulling the draperies.

Off the bedroom, we have a screened tent which is the nicest spot of all in the summer for afternoon drinks.

The living room has two speeds: one for summer with the redwood burl table, and one for winter with the counter-balanced, free-hanging copper fireplace, which is removed in the summer. (See picture on page 164 with fireplace removed.)

We also have a very simple, inexpensive seating setup which can accommodate 25 people comfortably in the living room alone. A long wooden bench follows the curve of the living-room wall and can hold 15 guests easily. We've had more than 60 people in our house without anyone ever feeling that he was being left out of anything. Parties, play-readings, student groups, conferences—they all seem to fit quite smoothly into "Il Cavo."

Similarly, this also holds true for our storage space. Figures are

(Continued on page 198)



• Using Nature's forms for building and decorating is both cheap and beautiful. Our towel rack is a real branch of a tree, stripped of bark. Lavatory counter is a vertical slice through a tree trunk, waxed and rubbed. The wall is smoked, mirrored glass. The plumbing under the lavatory is concealed by "splints" of board.

THE RICH REWARDS OF KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 165

boring, I know, but just for the record, we have 125 lineal feet of 7' high by 2'6" deep closets, in addition to 6' x 12' attic and 100 square feet of garden tool storage. All of this fits unnoticeably into the structure of the house.

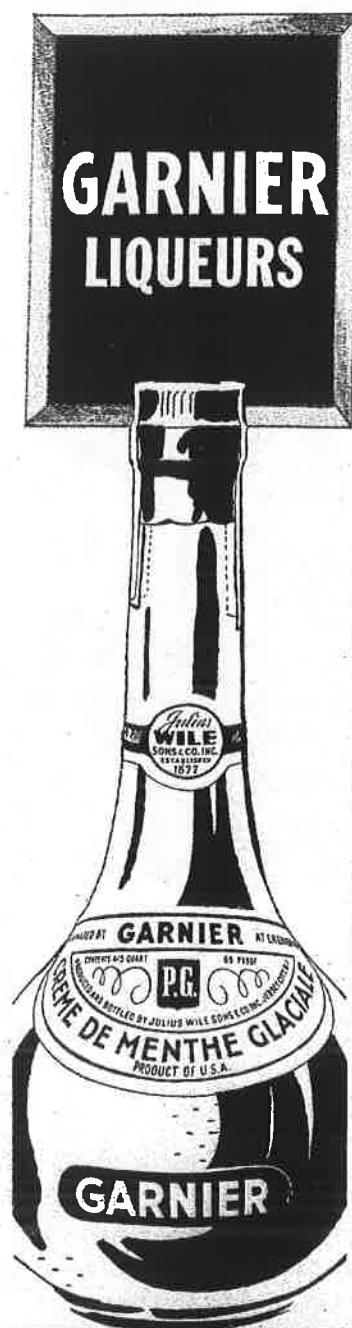
Our one touch of genius, however, is the large (6' x 10' x 8') free-standing radio-book-and-general-storage case which separates the living room from the study. This is entered through a secret panel which permits the use of all the space on the inside that is not used on the outside.

This cabinet is fitted with 14 shallow drawers, part of the total of 45 similar war surplus drawers beautifully made of basswood plywood, screwed and glued in the most elegant cabinet tradition. The drawers cost \$1.00 each and because of this bargain, we use them everywhere throughout the house for all purposes. Some of them have been louvered and some have not. They hold my shirts and shorts, Ilse's underthings, our important papers, and they're just a sample of what you can get when you go bargain-hunting on a budget as large as a molecule.

So much for the practical matters of "Il Cavo's" structure and function. We feel we've proved that an exciting and artistic house can work efficiently and be constructed inexpensively.

To me, however, the most vital aspect of my home is its ageless quality. It is neither reminiscent of past forms nor consciously striving to achieve futuristic ends.

It is individual. There is a oneness about the house that sets it apart as a work of creation and not of copy. Perhaps, this is because there is more of Nature in our house than there is of man-made design. I followed Nature's contours in building it, and if there



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is any force more exciting and dramatic than Nature, I don't know what it is.

It takes a bit of courage to throw away a set of plans and improvise and devise as you build along. It's very much like a politician who prepares a speech, studies it carefully, and then discards it and speaks extemporaneously, fitting his speech to his audience and in the end, winning more applause than if he had stuck to his prepared talk.

Courage has a way of rewarding its practitioners.

People ask me what I've learned from building my kind of house, and sometimes I find it difficult to express an answer in a few single words.

Let me put it this way, however. Our time on earth is short. There is a sense of adventure in life, a sense of experiment in home-building, and if a man wants to live fully these desires must be consummated.

Unfortunately, many homeowners merely exist. They will never take a chance on anything new, exciting or dramatic until it has been proven old. That's why most of the homes in America today are nothing more than dull, flat, painted boxes of sameness.

Ise and I took a chance, a small step forward. We built our house with imagination as our incentive and Nature as our guide. We built it inexpensively by using the resources we had and shopping around for bargains. We furnished it simply with hardy, indestructible materials, and our result is a home of comfort, utility, excitement, and timelessness.

An open house such as ours reacts to the changes in Nature very clearly; the sun and rain, the full moon, the seasons, the color and firmness of the day, the subdued charm of the evening, all are very definite and different. And perhaps that is one of the main facts in a good work of art. It is something definite; through all its complexities and subtleties there is evident a simple clear statement, for all its apparent simplicity there is a depth of order and understanding. It is other than the usual coziness of custom, or the compromise of timidity.

What have I learned from it?

I have learned that a home created and furnished with feeling, spirit, drama, simplicity, and rough effects is infinitely more livable and rewarding than a house slickly copied and coldly equipped with the latest in lacquered gimmicks.



Before His Time

LOYD RUOCCO, THE THOROUGHLY MODERN ARCHITECT



SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO ARCHIVE

ABOVE: Lloyd Ruocco at his 1950 Design Center in Hillcrest. **TOP:** Decks wrap two sides of Todd Pitman and Carmen Pauli's glass-walled 1958 Ruocco home on Mount Helix. Deep eaves are a signature of the designer. Vintage furnishings are from Mid-Century Design in Hillcrest.

As the oldest baby boomers begin claiming senior status, talk grows about a "new" concept called aging-in-place design. With it, architects and interior designers are starting to incorporate universal design ideas along with their own inventions to make life easier for people who want to remain in their homes through their later years.

The concept, it turns out, is anything but new. Lloyd Ruocco, San Diego's pioneering modernist architect, had the changing needs of the family in mind when he designed San Diego homes more than 50 years ago.

"He was the person to whom you turned for inspiration," said architect Bob Mosher, FAIA.

Mosher was one of many architects who have been inspired by Ruocco, who was ahead of his time in many ways.

While outstanding talents such as Kendrick Bangs Kellogg, James Hubbell and Wallace Cunningham have taken organic architecture to spectacular levels in the last few decades, Ruocco was doing the same thing a half-century ago. He managed to make a giant boulder slice through a glass wall. He used driftwood and live trees as towel racks. He sited homes on difficult sites to give their occupants jaw-dropping views while preserving their privacy.

By Wayne Carlson • Photography by John Durant



"There is this term, 'a Ruocco house,'" said Leonard Veitzer, FAIA. "There are a few architects who get to that point, but not many."

Also in the Ruocco fan club was the late Russell Forester, who was revered as an architect and artist. Others include architects Norm Applebaum, Paul McKim, Frederick Liebhardt and Ruocco's protégé and former partner, Homer Delawie.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 96

ABOVE: Vincent Ursillo and Jeff Kleve's 1952 Ruocco home in La Mesa is furnished with *Coconut* chair and table by George Nelson; sofa by Richard Schultz; and *Bird* chair by Harry Bertoia. RIGHT: The dining room. Rare prototype *Petal* table was designed by Richard Schultz; chairs and storage unit are by Charles Eames. Side table is by Eero Saarinen.

Post-1952 design elements:

- Simple modular designs
- Walls and closets on tracks that can be reconfigured to accommodate changing lives of occupants
- Post-and-beam construction with rectangular forms
- Deep eaves and "catwalks" that wrap residences
- Redwood-and-glass forms
- Radiant heat in floors and/or ceilings
- Lavish use of glass to maximize natural views and connect to the garden
- Metal prefab fireplaces



BEFORE HIS TIME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 89

A hands-on architect from 1937 until his death in 1981, Ruocco also installed prefab fireplaces and radiant floor and ceiling heating, placed walls and closets on tracks so they could be reconfigured, and designed modular houses that were both affordable and movable.

But what impresses owners of Ruocco homes and their guests most, perhaps, is the way the designer placed the houses into nature, whether the sites were sunken, tucked into hill-sides or placed high on towering slopes.

"Good architecture," he said, "should call for the minimum use of materials for the most interesting and functional enclosure of space."

He, of course, was preaching less is more.

"Ruocco believed in the beauty of the trees, canyons and sky," says Todd Pitman, a horticulturist who owns a 1958 Ruocco home with his wife, architect Carmen Pauli. "He believed that no level of architectural genius could equal the beauty of San Diego's natural landscape."

Early architecture critic James Britton had his own way of summing up the pioneer: "Lloyd was the archangel of architecture in San Diego."

Pitman and Pauli's home is a spectacular example of what Ruocco called "Garden Villas," affordable modular homes that can be reconfigured easily or even broken down and moved to another location.

It also is a stunning example of the way Ruocco placed homes below the brows of slopes or nestled them into canyons.

"There's supposed to be about six 'Garden Villas' left in San Diego," Pitman says, "including at least two in Mission Hills and one in La Jolla. They have plywood walls and such features as built-in phonograph systems. Ours is the basic home, however. It doesn't have a built-in record player."

Their home is notched into a high slope on Mount Helix to capture bird's-eye views from the southeast to the southwest. Pitman and Pauli bought the home three years ago and have been restoring it since. The top floor contains living and dining rooms and two bedrooms that open to a deck that wraps two sides of the house. Off the dining room is the kitchen. On the lower floor are an office, bedroom and a den, which opens to a deck.

Vincent Ursillo and Jeff Kleve have owned their 1952 Ruocco home in the Grossmont area of La Mesa since last November. The homeowners call their home a work in progress. As with the others, it connects beautifully with the environment. The glass walls of living room and master bedroom frame expansive views. The living-room fireplace is surrounded by wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling glass.

Margaret and Vincent O'Hara say the first thing visitors notice when they enter their 1948 Ruocco home in the Twin Peaks area of Mount Helix is the gigantic boulder that knifes through a wall of glass and into the dining room (see photo, page 88).

The O'Haras, who are retired, bought the home 10 years ago. Like the other Ruocco owners, they have done considerable work on their home.

A copper-hooded stone fireplace warms the wide-open interiors, which feature built-in bookcases, exposed beams and a floor plan that bends into a U shape to capture meandering views over much of the two-thirds-acre of lush garden, which was originally planted by Harriett Wimmer, co-founder of the landmark landscape architecture firm Wimmer Yamada and Caughey.

While the boulder is the head-turner, every space within the home is connected to the garden through glass doors and walls. ■

WHERE TO FIND IT — PAGE 114



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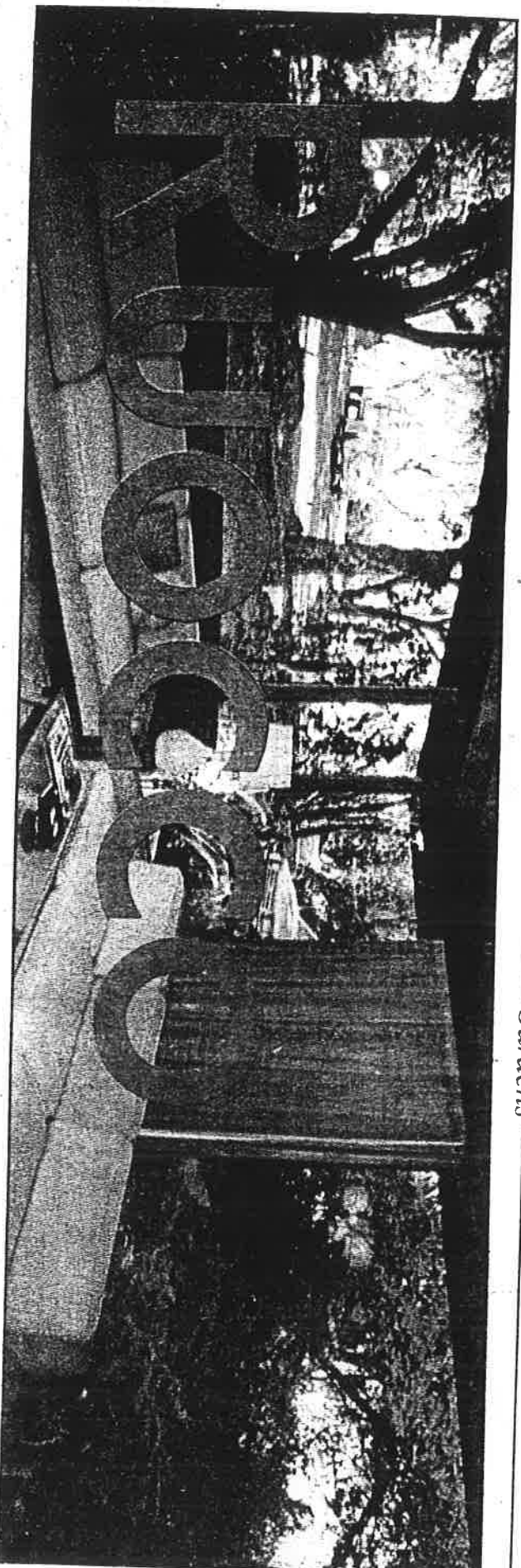
The San Diego Union

Sunday February 24, 1985 [2]

Homes

Currents in

Gardens

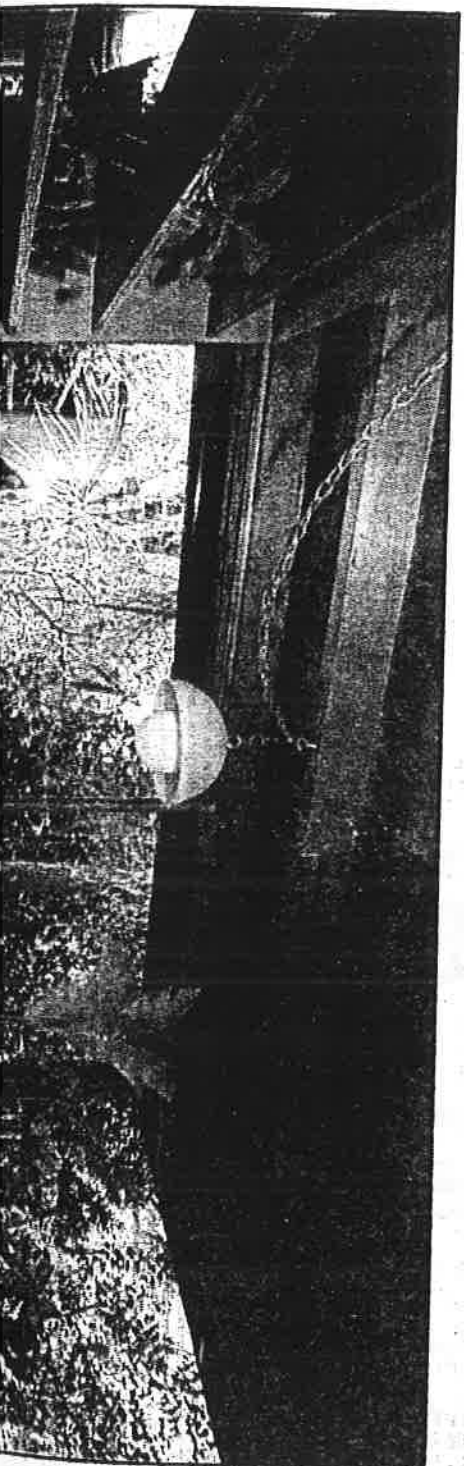


He designed homes to be refuges from pressure

By Kay Kaiser
Architecture Critic

Architectural civilians (those who are not now, nor have ever been an architect, nor ever associated with one) are waking up about architecture and the profile of our city.

Last week, this critic strolled into Roy Kiefer's architectural



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Last week, this critic strolled into Ron Kiefer's grocery and butcher shop in Mission Hills in search of good chicken breasts. Kiefer, long known for lovable irascibility and Midwestern raw practicality, glowered and pointed.

"What about that thing called 'art' the Port Authority wants to buy for the waterfront?" (He re-

Commentary

ferred to the Ellsworth Kelly sculpture proposed for Embarcadero Marina Park, currently under consideration for \$450,000 of public money.)

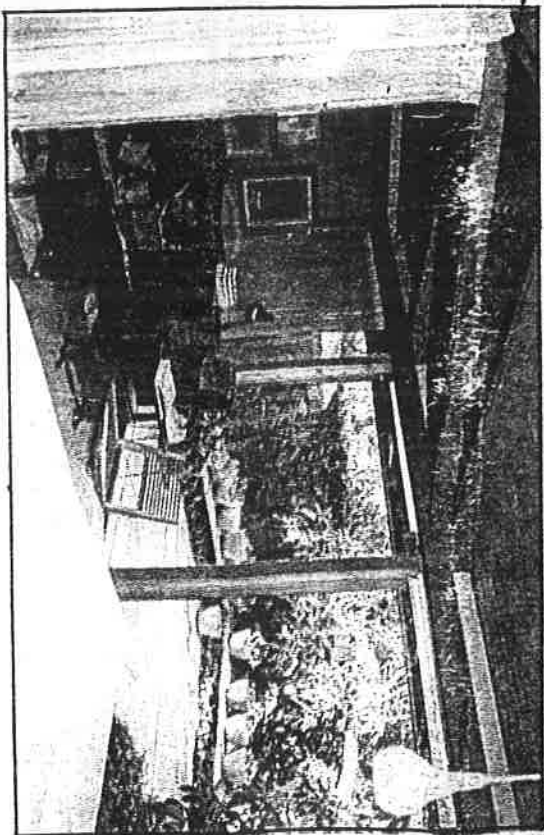
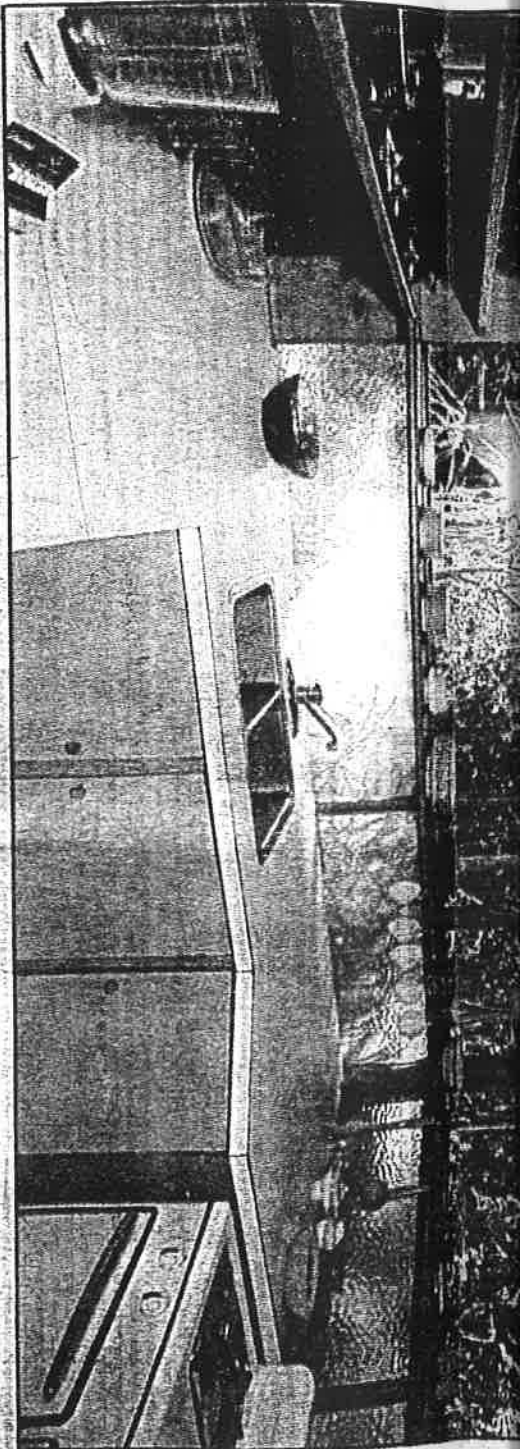
"We don't need that," he said, turning abruptly and seeking the solitude of his cold-room.

Many people agree with him. They don't think the six-story stainless steel spike with its accompanying four-story clot of concrete, intended to symbolize the soul of San Diego, are what people need right now.

It was an interesting moment at the butcher counter. Kiefer doesn't see the world in architectural terms; he sees the real world reflected in the lives of his customers. Kiefer sees the strain in their faces, and understands the pressure from their jobs, or how irritating it is to be shopping with children who seem obsessed with throwing grapes around the store.

Perhaps there's a need to look beyond shiny artifices to see what is really needed. Maybe the

See RUOCCO on Page F-15



The San Diego Union/Bob Redding

The late architect Lloyd Ruocco designed scores of San Diego houses that are tranquil refuges from pressure. Light, nooks and window seats are among their trademarks. Living room (top photo) and kitchen (second from top) are in home of Ethel Greene who rescued a Ruocco house from the path of a freeway in 1955 for \$1,725. Glassy entry way and patio-flanked bedroom are in home of Tom and Elizabeth Robertson.

From 1980 to closing on a Diego County ties were for "Lots of ti list or sell t to them, the someday, sor According and Urban D advise when problems. As highest forec percent of its Diego ranked That ranki ple in their tried to grab In 1980, wh puter consuli tive medical buy their fir

"Because thing to dedi anything big, going into it After casu months, they project and b the down pay "All of our new experien be any differ But in retr worst times prices were during three controls wer interest rate President combat inflai to the worst Housing con slowed to a ti

See F

Homeowners embrace the future with satell

Ruocco

Continued from F-1

most important thing in the lives of people is the place where they live — the place they go to recover from the daily pressures, stainless steel sculpture, and other cultural aberrations.

The current batch of suburban condo-boxes don't nourish people even if they have a round window over the hollow-core front door, or present the extra amenity of a concrete slab patio off the bedroom. Your door most likely looks right into your neighbor's door. If you look out a window, it's into another person's window, and the police are called even if you just wanted to see the sky or a bird. The only place of true seclusion is a closet or bathroom, but they offer little visual or emotional stimulation. There's nowhere to go.

This is not the optimum solution for a happy life.

The late architect Lloyd Ruocco spent his life making houses for San Diegans that were refuges from pressure. Pressure is nothing new. It was as much a part of his time (the '50s and '60s) as it is in ours, or any other time when several hundred thousand people get together and try to live in one city.

His houses were intended to take the pressure off. They gave people who lived in them a chance to heal before they faced their jobs, city council, or each other.

Ruocco houses gave people simple things. Light, nooks and window seats. He gave them small private places where they could spend the first hour after getting home from work. They emerged as human beings able to deal with the pressures of life.

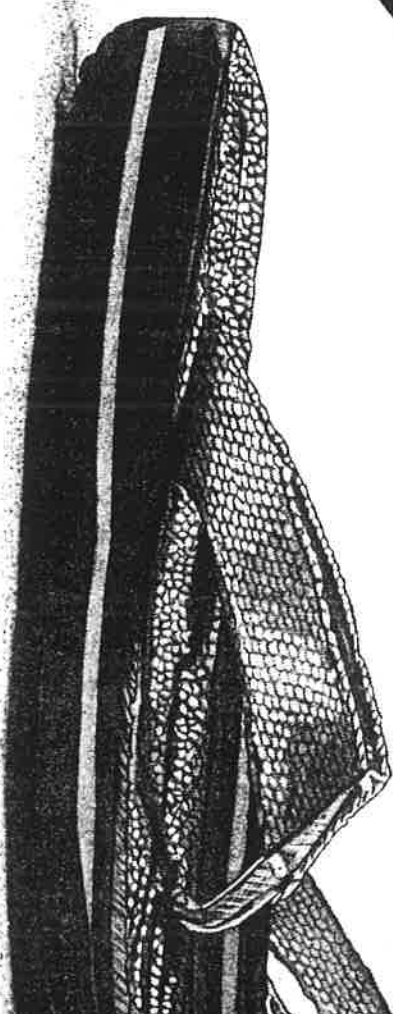
architect to give, but when you add up all the mornings people wake up to the sight of the same junk, Ruocco's disappearing shelves equal the design of the Guggenheim.

Glass was his medium — with just enough wood and steel to hold the place up. Though his designs no longer comply with current glass to wall area ratios, Ruocco houses were spectacular. Clever architects today could still create the essence of them. Glass ran from floor-to-ceiling, interrupted by simple wood beams. Cleaning was easy. Sometimes he'd surprise you with a bathtub with lights in the sides or a lightly hand-trailed stairway winding into a canyon. His ramps and catwalks were dangerous, but the bright eyes of danger added something to life. He put you on the edge. Purposely.

Nature, that ultimate healer — came into the house. Trees poked through balconies, and when the wind blew, they brushed against the glass. People need those things to bring life into perspective after they've milled around artificial things all day.

Not all of his clients had a lot of money. Many were artists, a profession not noted for economic solidity. Then he made them walls and ceilings of redwood plywood and masonite floors. But the materials were used with all the art and fine proportion used in marble work. His own house near State University and his offices in the Design Center at Fifth and Brookes were made from war surplus materials during the late '40s and early '50s. He used what he could get. Retaining walls at the Design

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Sunday, February 24,

wives, and the SD&E bill. Couples had separate dressing rooms that insured the last vestiges of mystery during a 30-year marriage. They had room for an exercise space, also hidden from view, lest the other partner get bored watching the 20 sit-ups Ruocco thought were required for good health.

Ruocco made floor-to-ceiling cabinetry of fine wood. All the things we collect were kept in there. Desks popped out of cabinets. Shelves of varied and carefully measured heights were designed. Other areas were made for things to hang or lean. And here's the best part: When you didn't want your mind jumbled by the sight of all those things, you closed the cabinet doors. Then you were free to think of other things — like a really good sculpture for the waterfront or how to make your mate happy.

This sounds like a small gift for an

Center are concrete rubble from broken-up city streets. Amid the jade and eucalyptus, the walls are fine — better than granite.

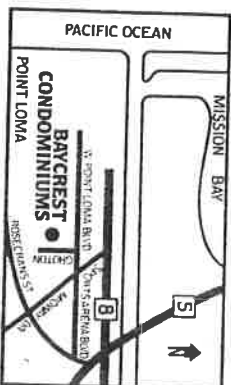
Ruocco, who attended the School of Architecture at UC Berkeley in the '20s, designed scores of residences in the San Diego area before he died in 1981. The UCSD Geophysics Laboratory was his as was the original design for the children's Zoo at the San Diego Zoo. He also was an unfulfilled member of the team that did the Community Concourse.

Tom Robertson, a former director of San Diego Museum of Art, and his wife, Elizabeth, have lived in their early, rustic Ruocco house for more than 30 years. They plan to stay there forever.

"This house has been my life," Elizabeth said, as happy with it today as she was 30 years ago. "My interest in art, and the people in my life have all centered around this

See RUOCO on Page F-16

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was conducted recently in Los Angeles.

Auction sponsor Mario Collura, president of MDR Telecom, an international computerized time-share listing service, said "Seventy-five time-share intervals were sold at the auction and by mail-in bid. The average price paid was \$4,000. Additionally, we have backup offers on a number of time-shares. We are pleased with the results and plan a second time-share auction in mid-July."

Collura reported that the lowest price that bought a time-share was \$1,500 for a one-week per year stay in Cancun, Mexico. The highest-priced unit to sell at the auction was a three-week interval at the luxurious Whaler on Maui, which went on the block for \$16,650.

Tabulations showed that 90 percent of the units that sold were priced with minimum bids of 50 percent of their market price. Results also showed that 75 percent of the units sold were acquired for less than \$4,000. The average price of a new time-share today is estimated at \$7,000. The most popular locations appeared to be Hawaii, Mexico and Lake Tahoe.

Official auctioneer for the real estate time-share event was the Piatelli Co., auction specialists in the Los Angeles area for more than 25 years.

Ruocco

Continued from F-15

house."

The living room, free from partitions with areas defined only by seating arrangements, was designed to hold 100 people or more for gatherings of artists or musicians. Ruocco built a stepped-up stage to hold their two grand pianos. Walls slide open onto the garden for more space.

Tom Robertson explains that his is not the most elaborate Ruocco house, but it suits him. He tells about the old-world woodworker who was brought to see the house. The old man was delighted with the rough wood in the beams and ceilings. "It's just like the barns back home," he said.

Elhel Greene is another San Diego artist who lives in a vintage Ruocco. She never thought she'd have a house designed by an architect of note. While living above a garage in the beach area, she learned that the state was about to auction homes in the path of the Highway 125 and Inter-

"You are in a big stewpot, going around. Still, far in the back of your mind, you have the idea that you would like to live in a lovely place, but you have no idea of what it is like because you don't have much time to think.

"When you do take time to reflect, you lean back in your chair, get out the magazines, or tour model homes to see new combinations of color and pseudobricks ...

"... If it were possible to simplify the architecture of tract houses, we would be able to save enough money to develop walled gardens and good landscaping and make a substantial savings at the same time.

"If we enclosed each home behind a six-foot walled garden, it would not be necessary to spend extra money on dramatic or visible smartness. This wall would also shut out considerable street noise, smooth down the bumpiness of pseudo-design, create street areas with the beauty of collaborative skill, and make it possible to live in privacy instead of on public

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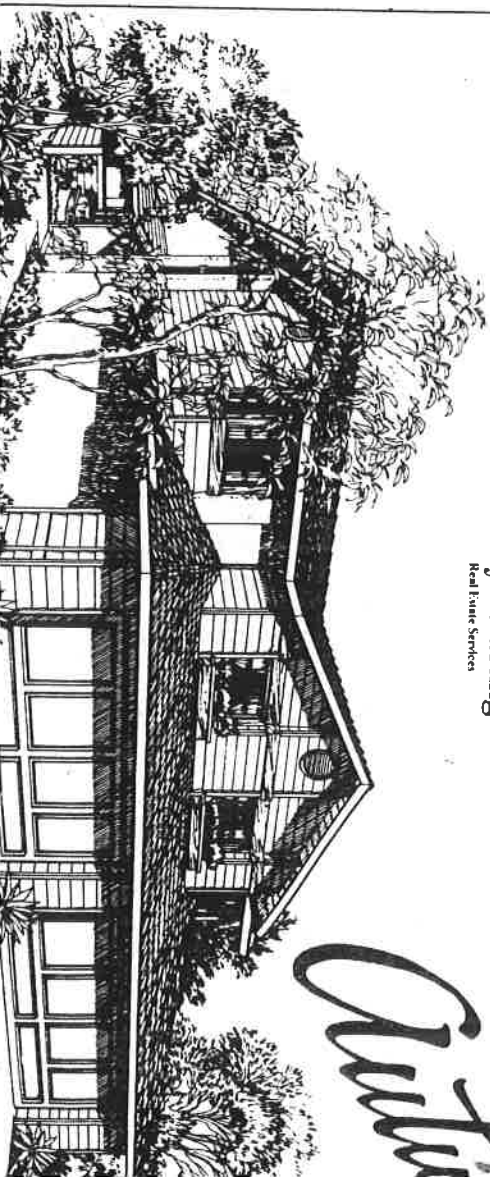
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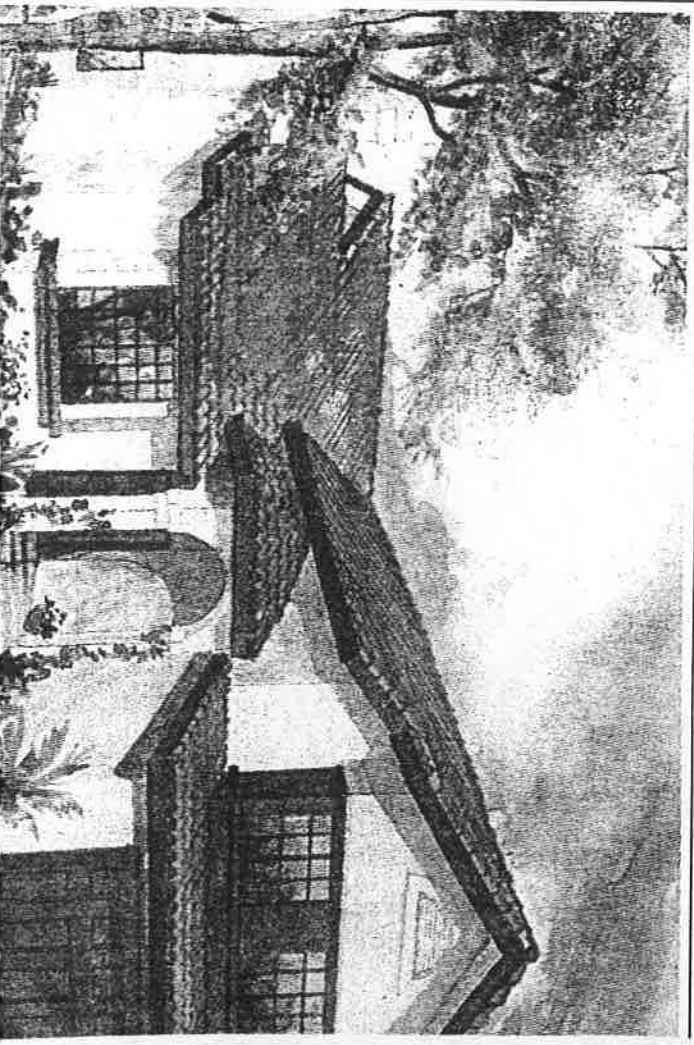
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"In addition, the inside garden would have subtlety and privacy against which the artifacts and necessities of "home" would shine forth in the proper uniqueness."

Like most good architects, Ruocco was a clever man. With kindness, he made these houses first, people to enjoy. That was the first, most apparent reason for his work.

He had a bigger cause in mind, but was clever enough not to say it outright. His secret motivation was hard to understand or put in words. It was something that happened, naturally, on its own.

Here's the secret: Ruocco thought that if people's spirits were pampered and held lovingly inside the walls of his houses, they would have more vigor and energy for their jobs and have energy left over to help make the city a better place.

He thought that if we were out of our "stewpot" houses and neighborhoods, we'd have the energy to go to Port Authority meetings, write letters about the changing waterfront, compromised Convention Center, unmatched Hotel Inter-Continental towers, stainless steel spikes, Navy hospitals in Balboa Park, the location for the downtown library, resorts built on age-old tidelands in North County, or any of the other things facing San Diego at this moment.

Lloyd Ruocco commented over 20 years ago: "Now I've got my home and office the way I want them. Now I've got to do something about the things in between."

He was a clever man. By making a good house, he made people whole. Whole people get things done. An amazing proportion of Ruocco-home dwellers are in the news regularly and have helped re-shape San Diego.

Think about that this morning when you look around your house. Then look out the window, and beyond.

It wasn't easy. Greene and Britton argued about how to orient the house in the trees. "You'd have thought it was his house, and his land," Greene said fondly now — after 30 years of recuperation. But it was worth it. The house still fits here. She paints every day and still enjoys walking into the light-filled kitchen with the trees beyond.

Perhaps our planning department should take note. They are currently reviewing the house-moving ordinances in San Diego. A moratorium has been placed on Southeast San Diego, and new regulations are being considered for the rest of the city, making the process either physically or economically unfavorable. The story of Ethel Greene's house points toward the possibility that there might be many valuable things we'd like to move around in our lifetimes. It also shows that moving a house is sometimes the only way a person can get the house they need to be happy.

Not everyone will be as lucky as Ethel Greene. They won't find a jewel at auction. Most people have to live with houses just barely touched by an architect-tract homes.

Ruocco wrote about the dilemma in the early '70s:

state 8 interchange. Only one other party participated in the bidding and Ethel won the house for \$1,725 in 1955 — a deal even then.

"It was an odd feeling," she said. "One moment I didn't have a house and the next moment I did."

Her next problem was to move the house to her lot in Spring Valley and figure out a way to rearrange it to fit among the olive trees. She enlisted the aid of her old friend, the late James Britton (the former San Diego Union architecture critic who always jumped at the chance to prove he could build as well as criticize), and together they cut the house into three pieces, hauled it onto the lot, and reassembled it.

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Ruocco wrote about the dilemma in the early '70s:



File Photo

Lloyd Ruocco

Lloyd Ruocco, Noted Architect, Visionary, Dies

"City, I am your child. Fill me with life."

Those words from visionary San Diego architect Lloyd Ruocco were bywords for much of the life Ruocco devoted to preaching that cities and architecture should be a harmonious cohabitation of people and nature.

The 74-year-old designer, a vital force in San Diego's art community for more than 40 years, died early Sunday morning after a lengthy illness. At his death he had completed his blueprint for "The New City," a book friends hope to publish posthumously.

In the 1950s, he planned on paper what he called a "kinderpath town" in which homes, necessities and amusements were connected by natural walkways and in which nature was as important as man-made structures. He tried to sell the idea to developers, but their "gridiron" plans were not ready for his visionary ideas of a garden city.

(Continued on B-2, Col. 1)

Visionary Architect Lloyd Ruocco Dies At 74

(Continued from B-1)

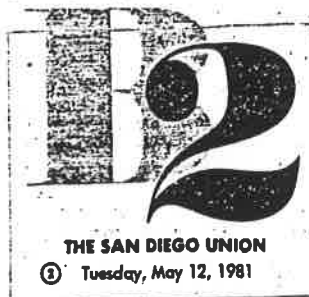
He never gave up his message — his Volkswagen camper was easily recognized by its license tag, which read: "NU CITY." Many of his ideas are incorporated in his book about the future of cities.

Plans are not yet complete for a memorial service planned for the Geophysics garden at UCSD, in the shadow of the building that is one of the finest examples of his belief that architecture should blend into nature rather than fight against it.

Among the best-known examples of his work are the Design Center office building at 3611 Fifth Ave., where he maintained his office and his wife had an interior-design shop, and where his "Child of the City" quote appears on an entryway mural. The Aviation Monument on Otay Mesa, as well as numerous homes around the county, are examples of his unique style.

He is survived by his wife, Ilse Hamann, a retired San Diego State University art professor who lives at the couple's Alvarado Estates home; a sister, Marea Wolfe of San Francisco, and a brother, Ralph Ruocco of Kensington.

Born in Bangor, Maine, of an Italian father and English mother, Ruocco was reared in Canada and came to the Santee area with his family about 1922. It was at San Diego High School that he began to show aptitude for architecture.



He earned a degree in architecture from UC Berkeley where, it was said, his stay as a student was remembered 20 years later at the School of Architecture because of his eloquent arguments for minimal architecture that allows nature to show through.

His eloquence, as well as what sometimes were considered his controversial ideas, marked Ruocco's presence in the community.

"Everyone loved to hear Lloyd talk. He said things freshly and humorously," remembered long-time San Diego newswoman Ettillie Wallace. She recalled a time about 25 years ago when he was invited to speak to the League of Women Voters at the El Cortez.

"The first thing he did," she said, "was have everyone stand and do a few exercises. Then he said, 'Now you are prepared for what I'm going to propose.'"

What Ruocco proposed became Citizens Co-ordinate for Century Three, a watchdog group aimed at keeping an eye on government actions in order to keep the city naturally livable and to preserve its canyons.

An admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, Ruocco was elected in 1974 to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. He was described by friends as a "practical dreamer."

As a young professional, Ruocco worked as a draftsman with Lillian Rice, who designed Rancho Santa Fe, and with the prominent architectural firm of Requa & Jackson.

A founder and chairman of San Diego's Allied Artists Council, Ruocco was a 1966 appointee of Gov. Edmund "Pat" Brown to the 15-member advisory committee on California beauty, as well as a former member of the Urban Renewal Commission and a moving force behind the development of Alvarado Estates near SDSU.

The Ruoccos had no children, but they became an inspiration to students, particularly at SDSU where she taught. They collaborated on a book for teachers called "Everyday Art" — written, Ruocco said, so that children "can employ architecture in wonderful ways throughout their lives."

Rites planned



LLOYD RUOCCO

Dead at age 74

A memorial service for architect Mr. Ruocco will be held Sunday afternoon at the Design Center office building at 3611 Fifth Ave. He was a member of Citizens Co-ordinating Land Use in the 1950s, which helped secure the area for parks.

Mr. Ruocco, 74, died Sunday at his home at 3603 Fifth Ave. He had lived in San Diego since 1922. He was a friend of Gov. Edmund Brown and a member of the League of Women Voters.

He expressed outrage at the involvement of the faculty in the matter up at our meeting chair. But he was or may not be.

2-Day
Wednesday a

Rites planned for architect Ruocco



LLOYD RUOCCO
Dead at age 74

A memorial service is pending for Lloyd Ruocco, 74, a noted San Diego architect and civic planner. Cremation was planned.

Mr. Ruocco, who lived in Alvarado Estates in a house he designed, died Sunday after a lengthy illness.

He designed homes and public buildings in the San Diego area and was a member of the design group for the Civic Theater. He was a founder of Citizens Coordinate for Century Three, established to watch city actions involving land development.

In the 1950s, he proposed a city development plan he called "Kinderpath Town" which would connect homes and other buildings with paths and "finger parks."

Mr. Ruocco and his wife, Ilse, worked in an office building he designed at 3603 Fifth Ave., where she had an interior design business.

Mr. Ruocco was born in Bangor, Maine, and had lived in San Diego County since 1922. He received a degree in architecture from the University of California at Berkeley.

He was a founder of the San Diego Allied Artists Council, served on former Gov. Edmund G. Brown's advisory committee on beauty in California, and was a member of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects.

Surviving besides his wife are brother, Ralph, of Kensington, and a sister.

COMMENTARY

Lloyd Ruocco — The Ecstasy Of His Vision

BY JAMES BRITTON II

It is not enough to say that Lloyd Ruocco died Sunday. It is not too much to say that Lloyd was the angel of architecture in San Diego.

Born in Maine, 1907, of an English mother and an Italian father, he grew up in Canada, educated with a B.S. at the University of California (Berkeley), he expended all his physical and personal energy in the quality of life in San Diego. Not only the numerous houses he designed gave joy, but he irradiated everyone with the incandescent ecstasy of his vision.

He had no children and yet he was more than a fatherly interest in children. He and his wife Ilse, both long an art professor at San Diego State University, made extensive efforts to see that the possibilities of architecture and city design were implanted along with the growth of several generations in the schools. The finest flower of this was a book they did for the city, produced by the American Company.

His contagious enthusiasm for conceived architecture and design was frequently transmitted to groups too, including his natural colleagues whom he dealt with verbal challenges that

sometimes left them hanging on the ropes when he would cut loose the balloon of his higher vision and sail off into the upper blue sky of ideal thought.

Architects admired Lloyd to the point of electing him a "Fellow" of the American Institute of Architects. Citizens admired Lloyd to the point of creating a local institution, Citizens Coordinate for Century Three, to meet his challenge that they care passionately about the future.

Architect Robert Mosher, a San Diego native who also unfolded his career here, offered a typical estimate of the Ruocco impact, saying: "When I started my practice here, Lloyd was the only architect doing anything modern in this town." Modern though he was at heart, in early years he worked as draftsman with Lillian Rice, designer of the exquisite Old World town of Rancho Santa Fe. And, in 1934, he did time on the boards that produced the semi-classical Civic Center of San Diego (now called County Administration Building).

Lloyd's own powers as a designer are most frequently encountered by the public in the Civic Theater, for which he and William Rosser were co-architects. He liked it especially because it was one downtown building that avoided the square box look.

Though it suffers from some pretentiousness to mask the minimum budget, it still seems to have the spirit of the archangel hovering in the grand space of the interior.

More reflective of the sweetness and purity of the Ruocco design conscience is the Geophysics Building on the Scripps Institution portion of the University of California campus in La Jolla. Serenity prevails there, at least to the eye, because Lloyd used redwood counterpoised against the waves of the ocean, as though redwood and ocean were engaged in a mystical marriage. Thanks to Professor Walter Munk and wife Judy, this building triumphed over the university's administrative stiffness to become the aesthetic revelation of the campus for those who find it tucked in the dense and mysterious landscape, presided over by a stone figure of Donal Hord's "Spring Stirring."

The archangel believed that buildings were less important than the nature in which they occurred. Glass, then, was especially important to Lloyd because of its self-effacing character. He used glass generously, and little else, in the office building called Design Center at 3611 Fifth Avenue, where tenants over the years have included several archi-

tects, landscape architects, photographers and others who value nature-in-the-city more than most. The special appeal of this rather minimal building is because of the maximum landscape — a canyon alive with towering eucalyptus trees. Important to the entrancing effect is a complex of lattices that seem to wed the structure to the setting. There's that mystical marriage again.

New owners of the Design Center thought so much of the architect Lloyd Ruocco that they ordered a mural for the entrance capturing an image of the archangel together with some hint of his scale of thought. A public memorial gathering will be held in the Geophysics garden at UCSD, the date to be announced later. Those who were especially touched by the archangel's wings are invited to call 274-1653 where another great friend of the arts in San Diego, Ettillie Wallace, will be handling arrangements.

Meanwhile, if you should see a Volkswagen camper about town with license reading "NU CITY," know that it once belonged to Lloyd Ruocco, FAIA, whose monument will be whatever good is done here by way of design.

Britton is architecture critic for The San Diego Union.