

# Historic Landmark Nomination

Presented to:  
City of La Mesa  
Community Development Department

The Cole Residence  
5628 Nokomis St.  
La Mesa, CA 91942

Architect: Lloyd P. Ruocco, FAIA



# HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION FORM

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Planning Division

8130 Allison Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91941 (619) 667-1177

### 1. NAME

Historic: None  
and/or common: Cole Residence

### 2. LOCATION

Address: 5628 Nokomis Street  
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91942

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY                                        | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS                                       | PRESENT USE                            |                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District               | <input type="checkbox"/> Public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural  | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial    | <input type="checkbox"/> Park                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> Both               | <input type="checkbox"/> Work in progress    | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site                   |                                             |                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object                 |                                             |                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Government    | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific                   |
|                                                 | <u>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</u>                   |                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation               |
|                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> In progress        |                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Military      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                       |
|                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered   |                                              |                                        |                                                       |

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Vincent Ursillo and Jeffery Kleve  
Address: 5628 Nokomis Street  
City: La Mesa State: CA Zip: 91942

### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.: County of San Diego Recorder's Office  
Address: 1600 Pacific Hwy  
City: San Diego State: CA Zip: 92101

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title: *None*

Date:

Depository for Survey Records:

City: State: Zip:

## 7. DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                |                                       | CHECK ONE                                     |                                                   | CHECK ONE |  |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original site |           |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins        | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered              | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved                    |           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed    |                                               |                                                   |           |  |

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

The Cole Residence, at 5628 Nokomis Dr. in La Mesa, is a one-story single-family residence built in the Mid-Century Modern style using post-and-beam construction methods. These methods limit the need for load-bearing walls, and allow for expansive use of floor-to-ceiling glass along the perimeter of the living areas. Glass walls are at the north, south, and west sides of the house. All are as originally built, with single-pane plate glass framed in redwood. Each glass wall has a sliding, redwood-framed glass panel door, which can be opened to allow for air circulation and ventilation. These doors are in addition to the main front door, a large, hinged, floor-to ceiling wood-framed glass door near the southwest corner of the house. There is also a matching exterior door in the rear of the house, allowing for passage from the second bedroom to the covered patio area, as well as a smaller door to enter or exit the carport from the laundry and kitchen area.

Although glass walls are a defining feature of the structure, the eastern perimeter wall, along with portions of the north- and south-facing walls, are clad in vertical board-on-board redwood siding. Currently painted, these exterior redwood walls were likely originally natural wood colored. This area of the house is separated from the main living area by a carport on the front, or south, side and a covered patio on the rear, or north, side. All areas of the house are under a single roof.

Roof of home is flat, as is typical for Mid-Century Modern post-and-beam construction. The roofing material is built-up asphalt with embedded aggregate topper. HVAC ductwork visible on roof is not original, as home was built with a radiant heating system embedded in the concrete slab. Where living area has exterior glass walls, eaves extend out four feet to allow for protection from the sun. At areas where walls are clad in wood, walls are pushed out to edge of roof. At southwest corner of house is a brick fireplace, abutted on both sides with exterior glass walls. Original fireplace finishes (black iron flue and cantilevered concrete hearth) are intact.

The house is rectangular in plan, with concrete slab flooring and lathe-and-plaster ceiling. Interior walls are clad in red birch plywood paneling, with several sliding-door storage cabinets in the central area of house. Original finishes are mostly intact.

Main living area has two bedrooms and two bathrooms. Originally there was a single, three-area bathroom, with a central water closet bracketed by rooms containing a bathtub on one side and a shower on the other. A previous owner installed an additional toilet, and split area into two separate bathrooms. In the bathrooms, vertical skylights with louvered windows for ventilation are made possible with a large recessed well area in the roof, uncovered and open to the elements. Since there is a drain in the well to allow for rain runoff, no cover is necessary and unobstructed views of the sky and natural light are features of the bathrooms. The two bedrooms in the main part of the residence have built-in closet and storage-drawer areas. Condition of living area is generally good, with some water damage to wood paneling that is planned for restoration by current owners.

Additional living area, the part of the home clad with wood siding, is accessed by passing through the covered patio visible from the rear of the dwelling. This area was likely originally a work/storage area.

A previous owner made a bathroom addition to this area in 1975, and the additional room is currently used as third, guest bedroom. Original exterior board-on-board redwood siding finish is intact, and there are no plans to return this area to its former storage/work purpose.

The residence is located within the Brier Tract of La Mesa, and as such there is a secluded, semi-rural look and feel to the site, with no sidewalks and minimal street lighting. Approach to the house is down a curved, sloping asphalt driveway, and the house is not well visible from the street due to length of driveway and dense vegetation. First view of house from driveway is of redwood siding clad carport, with entrance door and front patio area screened from view. Original landscape plantings are in some areas overgrown, and in some areas dead or missing; original planting plan is unknown. Current residents are working on a new period-sensitive landscape plan.

House is on a raised bluff to the west side of property, and the view to the west through the window wall is unobstructed save for some plantings for privacy. View to west originally overlooked the Eucalyptus Reservoir, the last storage reservoir on the path of the Cuyamaca Flume which passed through the Brier Tract to the north of residence. Former reservoir site now consists of Briercrest Park on Wakarusa Ave., as well as part of the Grossmont Hospital campus. Although there were originally other structures by the same architect and in the same style in the area, these have either been demolished with the expansion of the Interstate 8/State Highway 125 interchange or altered beyond recognition.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

| <u>PERIOD</u>                        |                                                  | <u>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW</u> |                                                 |                                                |  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499   | <input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599   | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural            | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Social / Humanitarian |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799   | <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration / Settlement      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899   | <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-       | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/Government    | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |  |
|                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Community planning      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)               |                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |  |

SPECIFIC DATES: Built 1952

BUILDER/ARCHITECT: Lloyd Ruocco

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

**Lloyd Ruocco:**

Lloyd Pietrantonio Ruocco was born in 1907 in Bangor, Maine. He came to San Diego in 1922, stopping briefly in Canada and Long Beach, California. He attended San Diego High School, and while still in school worked for the architectural firm of Richard Requa as a draftsman. Upon graduation from high school, he enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, where he earned his degree in architecture.

Upon receiving his degree, Ruocco returned to San Diego to work for the firm of Requa Hamil. While under their employ, Ruocco assisted on several large commissions including the 1935 Panama Exposition buildings in Balboa Park, the San Diego County administration building, and a community plan for the village of Rancho Santa Fe.

Throughout his early career, Ruocco gained a reputation for his arguments supporting minimal architecture and buildings that co-existed within the landscape. His goal was to minimize the structure and to allow the surrounding landscape into the building through shadow and light. This would be the driving force behind his architecture; a body of work which would begin in the late 1930's and produce several of San Diego's best examples of Mid-Century Modern design. He would complete nearly two hundred commissions before retiring in the mid 1970's.

**Selected Work**

Although Ruocco's greatest contributions seem to be most evident in his residential projects, his influence can be seen throughout San Diego County in his larger commissions as well as his philosophies that still persist within the organizations and professionals whom he inspired.

Perhaps his most significant project, the Design Center on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in San Diego, best embodies his architectural language. Ruocco chose to build a sensitively sited glass box for his own offices. Completed in 1949, the Design Center was envisioned to be the creative hub for San Diego's architects, landscape architects, artists, and designers. The building embraces the natural contours of the wooded canyon, allowing it to sit lightly within its site. Redwood post and beam construction, sliding walls, and glass allow for an enormous level of flexibility in floor plan. Ruocco believed that people, not buildings, were primary in design. Once inside the Design Center, the structure seems to disappear giving way to sun, clouds, trees, and air. The illusion was deliberate and is a hallmark of his design. As well as housing Ruocco's offices, the Design Center was also the site of a home furnishings and decorative arts store run by his wife, Ilse Ruocco.

As the recipient of a 1964 American Institute of Architects Award of Excellence, the UCSD Geophysics Laboratory at Scripps Institute of Oceanography remains one of Ruocco's largest and most intact commissions. Appearing to hover over its coastal bluff location in La Jolla, the building successfully furthered many of the architect's design principles. Taking full advantage of the site's coastal views, the building's offices, laboratories, and classrooms offer flexibility within a wonderfully natural-lit space. Clad in redwood, like many of Ruocco's other designs of the period, the building harmonized with its natural setting. Not only a complete success in functionality and beauty, the architect accomplished the seemingly unprecedented; choosing readily available materials and designing with an eye towards efficiency of construction, the building was completed under the proposed budget.

Lloyd Ruocco was also a social visionary. He believed, as with many of his contemporaries, that architecture, landscaping, planning, and design could drastically improve peoples' lives. His efforts and vision were not limited solely to those who had the good fortune to have directly experience his architecture and philosophy; Ruocco spent his career working for all people. His vision was for a more functional and beautiful city, for all in San Diego. In the early 1960's Ruocco would form the still-active Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (or C3). This organization, he believed, would allow people to take an active role in the future of the city in which they lived. Ruocco would host C3's first meetings within the design center and took this opportunity to share his vision of the future with all who would listen. Although these ambitions may not have been fully realized, C3 continues to foster Ruocco's vision through their efforts. Their work to ensure a beautiful San Diego through smart design has resulted in several successful campaigns including preventing CalTrans from widening Highway 163 as it passes through Balboa Park. Lloyd and Ilse Ruocco's efforts also initiated the planting of jacaranda trees along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Hillcrest. All who live, work, or play in San Diego can experience his gifts to this city, even today.

### **Garden Villas**

In 1953, Lloyd Ruocco utilized the San Diego Home Show in Balboa Park to display his concept for low-cost housing of the future. With the design and construction of a prototype home, the architect attempted to apply several construction methods that would be great time- and cost-savers while simultaneously offering the inhabitant generous flexibility of design. These houses could be partially prefabricated, taken apart, and constructed with a minimum of labor. These homes were intended to be constructed of common materials, using an eight-foot structural grid that minimized construction waste. Radiant heating in floor, ceiling, or both was considered the most economical heating plan and could be controlled from any room in the home.

The homes offered an open floor plan that, due to its post and beam construction, could be easily customized to suit the resident's specific needs. Ample built-in furniture maximized space and limited furniture expenditures. Sensitively sited walls of floor-to-ceiling glass maximized both views and privacy. Affordable architect designed homes; Lloyd Ruocco called these designs Garden Villas. In a testament to the homes' success and flexibility, the architect had the materials from the prototype home taken apart and rebuilt three miles to the east on a canyon site as his and Ilse's personal residence within the community of Alvarado Estates. The new home resembled the first only in its materials and method of construction, illustrating the flexibility and efficiency for which it was designed.

### **The Cole Residence**

Although pre-dating the Garden Villa project by a year, the Cole Residence in La Mesa, completed in 1952, has obvious similarities to the Garden Villa, and can be seen as a precursor to the noted exhibition house. The home maintains its original character and displays many of Ruocco's signature features. As with nearly all of his designs of the period, the home is of post and beam construction. Exterior features include board-on-board redwood siding, deep overhangs, and lavish use of floor to ceiling glass. The home is sited such that it is not fully visible from its front approach (a typical Ruocco feature) but is set several feet below street level thus providing exceptional privacy despite its predominately glass exterior. In this siting, the home also provides the inhabitant expansive vistas to the west.

The home is built on one of four plots of land in the Brier Tract that had been owned by Ilse Haman, future wife of Lloyd Ruocco, upon a land transfer in 1939. Although there may have been other

Ruocco-designed houses built on these plots, research has not discovered any information regarding this, and no other extant houses in the neighborhood bear the distinctive characteristics of Ruocco's works.

### **Ruocco and La Mesa**

Lloyd Ruocco began his career as an independent architect, opening his own office after leaving the firm of Richard Requa in the mid 1940's. His first place of business was out of his private home on Lakewood Drive in La Mesa. This street, near the intersection of what is currently Murray Drive and Wakarusa Ave, was bulldozed for the expansion of the Interstate Highway 8 and California Highway 125 interchange, as was the Ruocco's home. Il Cavo, as the home was named, overlooked the Eucalyptus reservoir, as did the Cole Residence. It was a well known home, and was published in many national magazines and journals. Given the thick vegetation and the stands of eucalyptus trees that gave the reservoir it's name, it is uncertain if there was a view of Il Cavo from the Cole Residence.

The Grossmont Spec house, built in 1969 by Ruocco and also located near the intersection of Murray and Wakarusa, was visible to the west of the Cole Residence. This house, the only known non-commission private home designed by Ruocco, was demolished in 2007 to make way for a still-unbuilt senior housing complex.

In addition to these three houses (Cole Residence, Il Cavo, and Grossmont Spec House), there were at one time more than 12 Ruocco-designed homes within the city of La Mesa. Of these, about 10 have been documented to still exist. Several others (including Historical Site Lillie House) are located within the unincorporated Mt. Helix area. Commercial projects for Ruocco's office in La Mesa include the 1950's remodel of the shopping arcade at 8371 La Mesa Blvd. The office also worked on the plan for La Mesa's city center area. Since Ruocco's project and plan archives were regrettably destroyed upon his death, it is difficult to know with certainty how many projects he worked on or completed in the City of La Mesa. However, there can be no question that the projects that are known, taken along with the fact that his first professional office was in La Mesa, highlight his significant contribution to the fabric of the city.

**9. SOURCES****Photos****Floorplan**

Heating plan for Cole Residence shows original footprint of home, and layout of living space.

**Maps**

1. 1912 Map of Briar Tract
2. Map of Cuyamaca Flume
3. 1946 Map of Grossmont and Mount Helix areas
4. 1971 boundary adjustment map
5. 1973 Thomas Brothers map

**Chain of Title and Grant Deeds****Periodicals/Reports/Brochures**

Harper, Hilliard. "Restored Building a Tribute to Architect", Los Angeles Times, 4 July 1988.

Smith, Clyde. "Surprises in S.D. Fireplaces", San Diego Union, December 13, 1953.

Ruocco, Lloyd. "Ruocco's Garden City", San Diego & Point, September 1958.

Britton, James. "Ruocco's Roost, Is it the Cure for Tractitis?" San Diego & Point, August 1958.

Delawie, Homer. Portfolio for AIA Fellowship Nomination. October 1972.

Program: San Diego Home Show and Food Show Jubilee. 1953

Ruocco, Lloyd. "The Rich Rewards of Knowing What You Want", House Beautiful, March 1950.

Kaiser Kay. "Ruocco", San Diego Union Tribune, 24 February 1985.

Carlson, Wayne. "Before His Time", San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles, September 2005.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

The Southerly 150 feet of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, according the Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the Recorder of said San Diego County, September 11, 1912 described as follows:  
Beginning at the Southeast corner of said Lot; thence along the Easterly line thereof North 17 ° 59' East 81.99 feet and North 15 ° 16' West 74.66 feet to the Northeast corner of the land; thence South 89 ° 48' West along the Northerly line of said land 176.52 feet; thence South 22 ° 37' 57" East 162.27 feet to the Southerly line of said lot 19; thence North 89 ° 48' East along said Southerly line 108.42 feet to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY:**

Jeffery S. Kleve

**APPLICATION PREPARED BY:**

Jeffery S. Kleve

## **Documentation and Resources**

Photos:

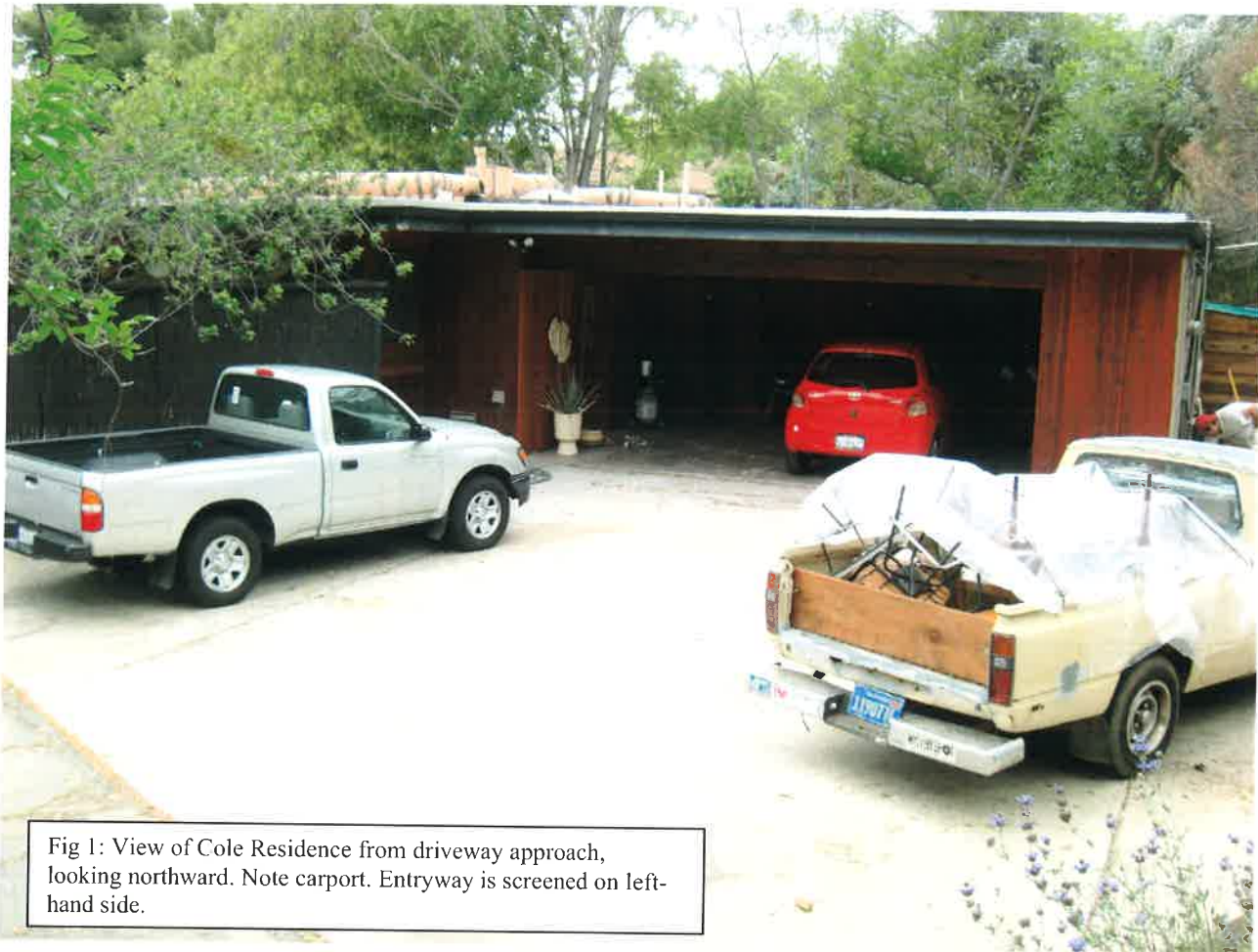


Fig 1: View of Cole Residence from driveway approach, looking northward. Note carport. Entryway is screened on left-hand side.



Fig 2: View of entryway, looking westward.



Fig 3: Front (south side) of residence, viewed from southwest corner.



Fig 4: West side of residence, viewed from southwest corner. Note exterior of brick fireplace on right side.



Fig 5: North, or rear, view looking from northwest corner



Fig 6: Entire rear view of residence. Note glass walls of living area, covered patio, and redwood clad "guest quarters".

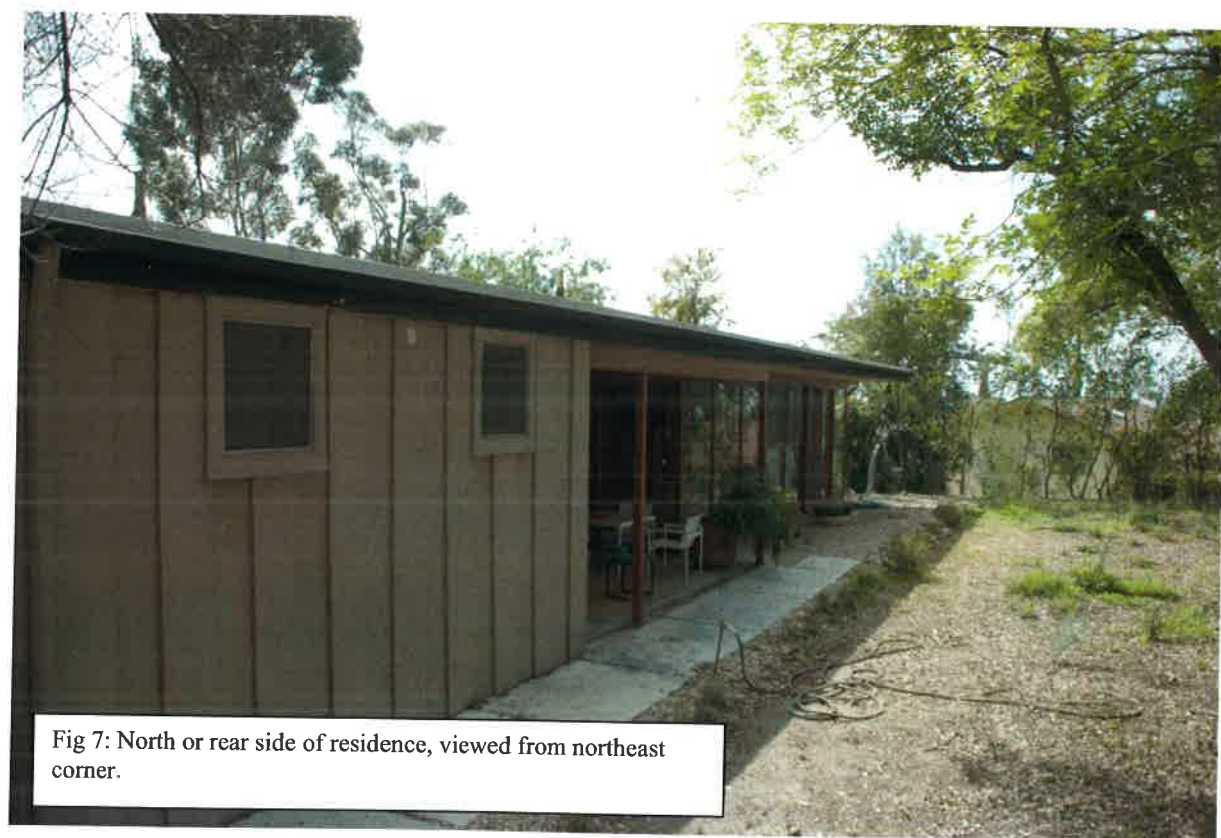


Fig 7: North or rear side of residence, viewed from northeast corner.

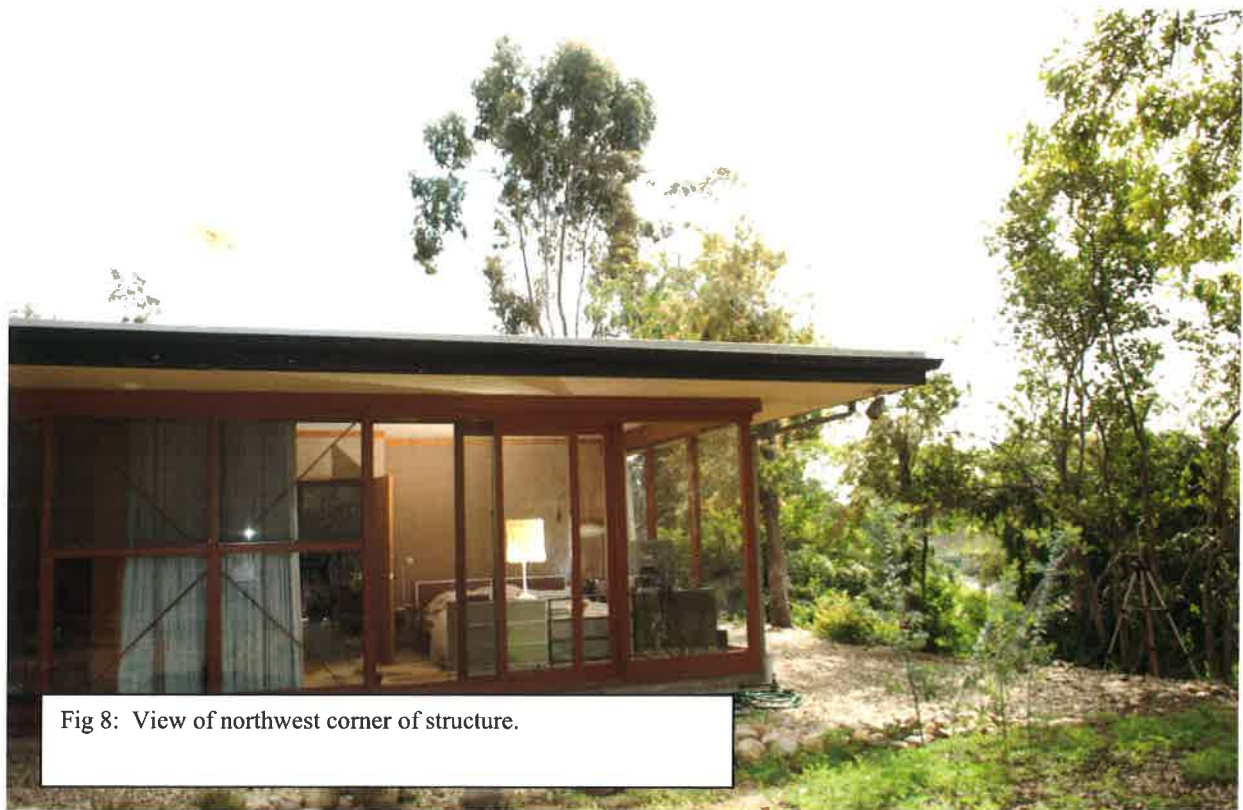


Fig 8: View of northwest corner of structure.



Fig 9: East side of residence, viewed from southeast corner.  
Note painted board-on-board redwood on eastern perimeter.

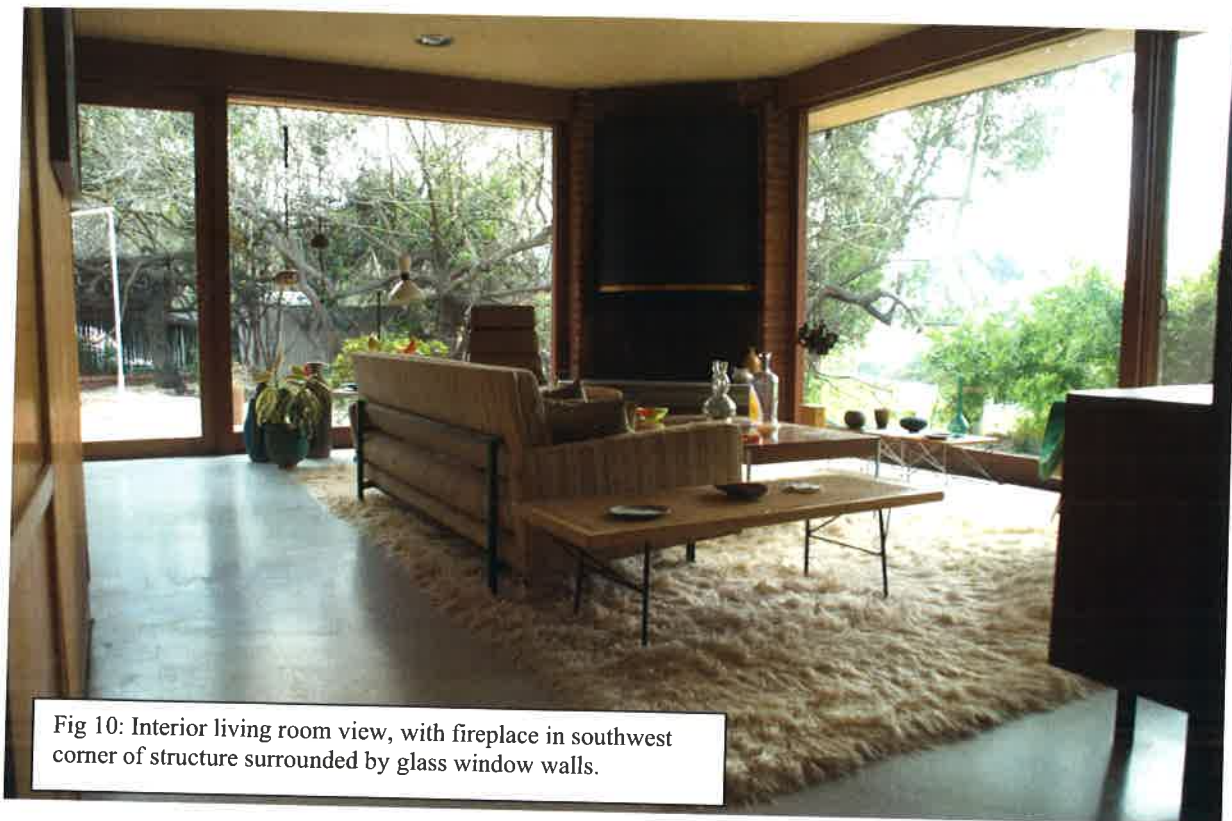
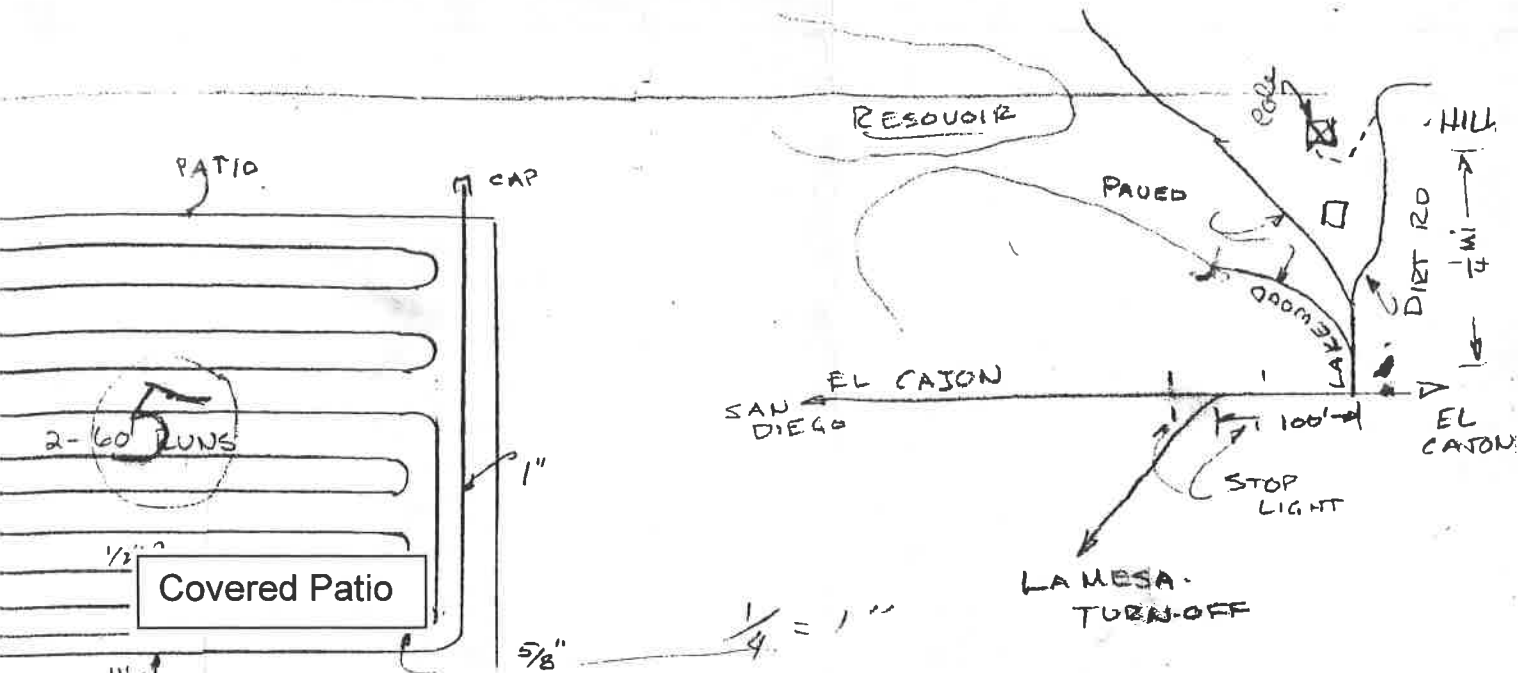


Fig 10: Interior living room view, with fireplace in southwest corner of structure surrounded by glass window walls.



HEATER BURKAY  
CAP IN HEATER RM  
BAL VA PANEL

Dry/Utility

STAY AWAY FROM TOILET TRAP & FLANGE!  
" " " SHOWER TRAP.

PANEL HAS (1)  $\frac{3}{4}$ " & (5)  $\frac{5}{8}$ " VALUES

1030'  $\frac{1}{2}$ " tube

27'  $\frac{1}{4}$ "

50' 1"

85'  $\frac{3}{4}$ "

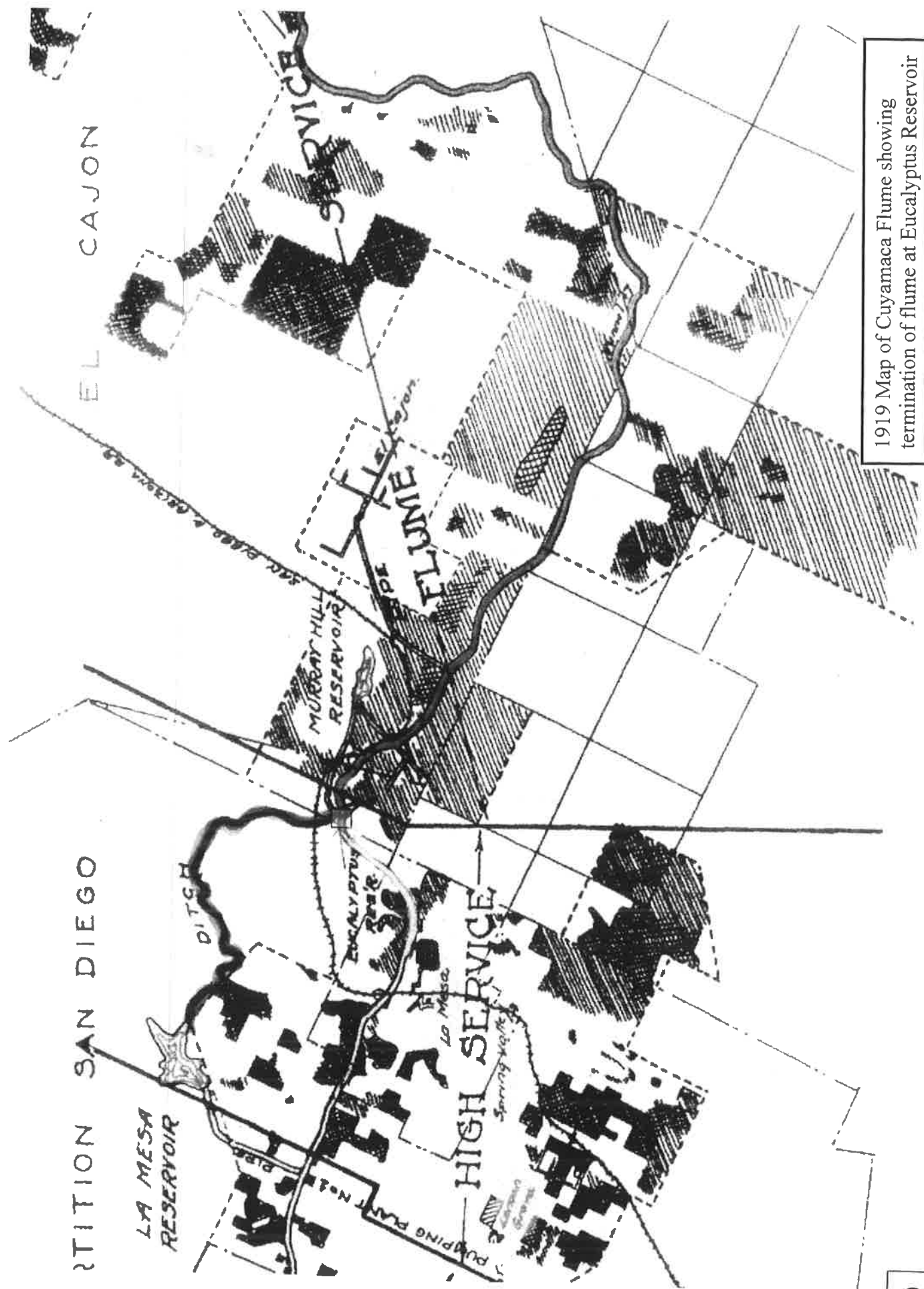
APPX 700'  $\frac{5}{8}$ "

Original heating plan, showing Cole Residence living area footprint. Note Eucalyptus Reservoir site on inset map.

COLE RESIDENCE - LRUOCO AIA

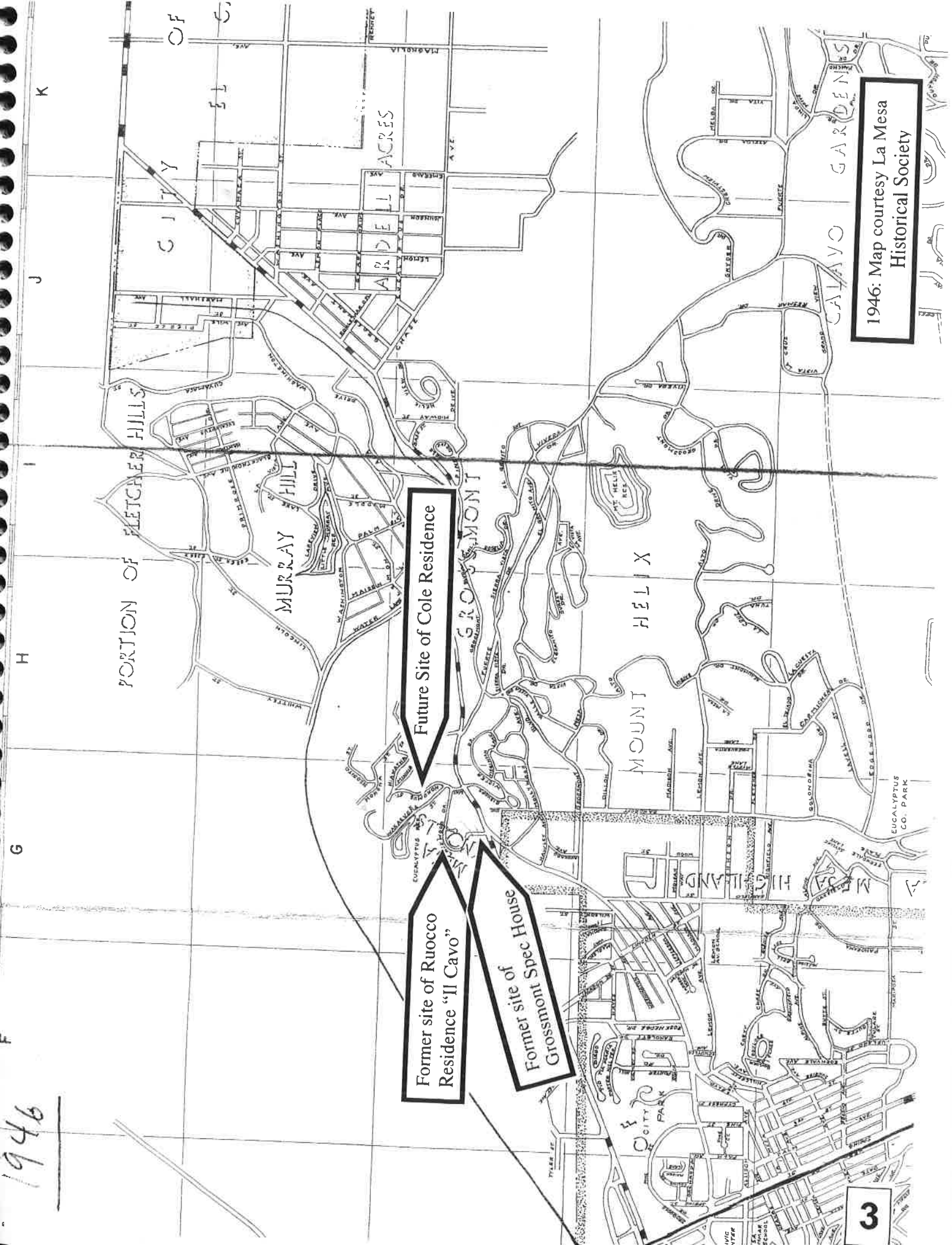






1919 Map of Cuyamaca Flume showing termination of flume at Eucalyptus Reservoir

1946



1946: Map courtesy La Mesa Historical Society

SCALE: 1"=30'

BASIS OF BEARINGS:  
WEST LINE BRIER TRACT  
MAP 1475 (N 0° 56' W)  
BEARINGS IN DEED IN  
SEC. 17 HAVE BEEN CON-  
VERTED THERETO.

STREET

NOKOMIS

BOUNDARY ADJ.

MAP NO. 17-A-11

Dwg. 64-4-A

1971: Boundary Adjustment Map.  
Shows placement of Cole  
Residence on lot

500.56.00 E  
22.22.00 E

POR MAP

DEAR  
SEC. 17  
VERTED

LINE S. 150 LOT 19  
256.52' 176.52'

LOT 19  
1475

BRIER

TRACT

HOUSE  
5628 NEXAMIS

03,04C SQ. FT.  
(0.529 AC)

MARCH 23 1971

ACCT. 4115

L.M.E.S. DWG. B-64-A

PREPARED BY: E. LYLE McALLISTER - LAMESA ENGINEERING SERVICE  
 LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR NO. 2801  
 8580 LA MESA BLVD., LA MESA, CALIF. 92041  
 460-9000

E. Lytle McAllister

PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT FOR LOT 19, BRIER TRACT, MAP 1475, & POR. LOT 4, SEC. 17, T.16S, R.1W, S.B.B.C.M. CITY OF LA MESA, CALIFORNIA

PREPARED AT REQUEST OF:  
MR. WILLIAM I. DARNELL  
5628 NOKOMIS STREET  
LA MESA, CALIF. 92041  
TEL. 469-0572

APPROVED ON THIS 24<sup>TH</sup> DAY  
OF MARCH, 1971

GRANT E. BURNS  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING  
LA MESA, CALIFORNIA

4



**CHAIN OF TITLE  
COLE RESIDENCE  
5628 NOKOMIS STREET  
LA MESA, CA 91942**

1. 1944: Transfer of land from Albert C. Williams and Emma E. Williams to Ilse Ruocco
2. 1951: Transfer from Ilse Ruocco to E. S. Cole and Cecile M. Cole
3. 1955: Transfer from E.S. Cole and Cecile M. Cole to William T. Darnell and Marie S. Darnell
4. 1971: Transfer from William T. Darnell and Marie S. Darnell to Frederick A. Schmaltz and Gail T. Schmaltz
5. 1989: Willed transfer from William T. Darnell and Marie S. Darnell to Mari Bisbee (daughter)
6. 1993: Transfer from Mari Bisbee to Wilma E. McGrath
7. 1999: Transfer from Wilma E. McGrath to R. Samantha Attebery
8. 2004: Transfer from R. Samantha Attebery to Jeffery S. Kleve and Vincent H. Ursillo

4-8-0-3358  
BOLC Form 154, CALIFORNIA  
Satisfaction of Mortgage  
Approved 8-0-39

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That the mortgage to HOME OWNERS' LOAN CORPORATION, a corporate instrumentality of the United States of America, as mortgagee, executed by H. LEROY EDWARDS, and MARIE L. EDWARDS, husband and wife, as mortgagors, and recorded on the 22nd day of January, 1936, in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Diego, State of California, in Book 473 of Official Records at Page 85, is together with the debt thereby secured, fully paid, satisfied, and discharged.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, said HOME OWNERS' LOAN CORPORATION has caused this instrument to be executed by its officer thereunto duly authorized and its corporate seal to be hereunto affixed, this 25 day of July, 1944.

Home  
Owners'  
Loan  
Corporation  
Washington,  
D. C.

HOME OWNERS' LOAN CORPORATION  
By C. Johnson  
Regional Treasurer

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

On this 25 day of July, 1944, before me, ARTHUR J. HEALY, a Court Commissioner for the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the City and County of San Francisco, duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared A. C. JOHNSON, known to me to be the Regional Treasurer of the Corporation that executed the within instrument and also known to me to be the person who executed the within instrument on behalf of the Corporation therein named, and acknowledged to me that said Corporation executed the same.

Arthur J.  
Healy  
Court  
Commissioner  
of  
California  
Residing at  
San Francisco,  
California

Arthur J. Healy  
Court Commissioner for the Superior Court  
of the State of California, in and for  
the City and County of San Francisco.  
My commission expires at the will of the  
Superior Court.

Recorded at request of H. L. Edwards Aug 15 1944 11 A. M.

Fee \$1.00 4  
60233

Roger N. Howe, County Recorder  
By Deputy H. I. Erb.

*John H. Fisher*  
---000---

*3K 1719/3 453*

|                                   |                           |                        |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| DOCUMENTARY & RECORDS<br>50 cents | OFFICIAL 1944<br>25 cents | Certified<br>2 Dollars |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|

GRANT DEED

ALBERT C. WILLIAMS and EMMA E. WILLIAMS, husband and wife,

For and in consideration of Ten and No/100 DOLLARS,

Do hereby grant to ILSE BANANN, a single woman

All that Real Property situated in the County of San Diego, State of California, bounded and described as follows:

PARCEL 1:

Lot 37 of The Brier Tract, according to the Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the Recorder of said San Diego County September 11, 1912.

PARCEL 2:

Lot 38 of The Brier Tract, according to the Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the Recorder of said San Diego County September 11, 1912.

PARCEL 3:

Lot 20 of The Brier Tract, according to the Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the Recorder of said San Diego County September 11, 1912.

## PARCEL 4:

The Southerly 150 feet of Lot 19 of The Brier Tract, said Southerly 150 feet of Lot 19 being measured along the West line of said Lot and the North line of said portion of said Lot being parallel with the South line thereof, according to the Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the Recorder of said San Diego County September 11, 1912.

Subject to the conditions and restrictions set out in that certain declaration of restrictions executed on June 10, 1944 by the grantors herein and recorded July 20, 1944 in Book 1714, page 180 of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of said San Diego County.

The conditions and restrictions contained in said declaration of restrictions are hereby incorporated in and made a part of this deed with the same effect as if set out at length herein and are hereby made applicable to and binding upon the property hereby conveyed.

The ground floor square foot area of any dwelling placed or erected on each parcel of the property hereby conveyed shall be not less than 1000 square feet, exclusive of porches, patios, attached garages or exterior stairways.

A guest house may be placed or erected on each parcel of the property hereby conveyed and the ground floor square foot area of any such guest house shall be not less than 500 square feet. No guest house shall be placed or erected on said property prior to the placing or erection of the main dwelling house thereon.

WITNESS our hands this 22nd day of July, 1944.

Signed and executed in presence of  
Villa Belle Alexander

Albert C. Williams  
Emma E. Williams

STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO ) ss.

On this 26th day of July, 1944, before me, the undersigned a Notary Public in and for said County and State, residing therein, duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared Albert C. Williams and Emma E. Williams known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that they executed the same.

WITNESS My Hand and Official Seal.



Ploy L. Bourne  
Notary Public in and for said County and State.

Recorded at request of Southern Tl. & Tr. Co. Aug 17 1944 at 9 A. M.

1.20 7  
60672

Roger N. Howe, County Recorder  
By Deputy H. Zervas.

*Notary Seal*  
--000--

## PARTIAL RECONVEYANCE OF TRUST DEED

THIS INDENTURE, Made this 9th day of August, A. D. 1944

WITNESSETH: That, heress the SOUTHERN TITLE & TRUST COMPANY, a corporation, Trustee, hereinafter mentioned, has been duly ordered by the beneficiary in the Trust Deed hereinafter referred to, to reconvey the property hereinafter particularly described, being a portion of the property described in that certain Deed of Trust dated September 17th, 1941, made by MIGUEL R. NAVA and JENNIE NAVA, husband and wife to SOUTHERN TITLE & TRUST COMPANY, a corporation, Trustee, as second party, which said Deed of Trust was recorded in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Diego, State of California, on the 23rd day of September, 1941, in Book 1256, Page 6, et seq. of Official Records, Deeds.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises, the said SOUTHERN TITLE & TRUST COMPANY, a corporation, Trustee, does hereby quit-claim and reconvey, without Warranty, unto the person or persons legally entitled thereto, all interest acquired by it, under and by virtue of said Deed of Trust in and to the property hereinafter particularly described, it being understood and agreed that all other property mentioned in said Deed of Trust shall be and remain and be held by said Trustee, as security in all respects in said Deed of Trust stated, and that no rights of any of the parties in said Deed of Trust as to said remaining property shall be deemed to be in any manner affected by this reconveyance.

3155 db

BOOK 4138 PAGE 66

## GRANT DEED

THIS FORM FURNISHED BY UNION TITLE INSURANCE AND TRUST COMPANY

Affix I. R. S. \$ 3.85

Form 535 3-50

ILSE RUOCCO, who derived title to the property  
in the name of ILSE HAMANN

GRANT to

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, do hereby  
E. S. COLE and CECILE M. COLE,  
husband and wife, as joint tenants,the real property in the  
State of California, described as:

County of San Diego,

The Southerly 150 feet of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, according to the Map thereof  
No. 1475, filed in the office of the Recorder of said San Diego County, September  
11, 1912; said Southerly 150 feet being measured along the West line of said  
lot and the North line of said portion of said lot being parallel with the  
Southerly line thereof.

Dated: May 31, 1951

Ilse Ruocco

State of CALIFORNIA  
County of SAN DIEGO

ss.

On June 4, 1951,  
before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in  
and for said County and State, personally appeared  
Ilse Ruocco

known to me to be the person whose name is  
subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that  
he executed the same.  
WITNESS my hand and official seal.



SPACE BELOW FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY

DOCUMENT No. 7651  
RECORDED AT REQUEST OF  
UNION TITLE INSURANCE & TRUST CO.

JUN 18 1951 at 9: A.M.

BOOK 4138 PAGE 66

OFFICIAL RECORDS  
County of San Diego, California

Fee \$ 1.70 Folios 3  
ROGER N. HOWE, County Recorder

By N. Z. Deputy.

STAMP IN THIS SPACE

# Grant Deed

2106

L.R.S. 30.80

E. S. COLE and CECILE M. COLE, Husband and Wife,

(GRANTOR - GRANTORS)

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,

Do Hereby Grant To WILLIAM I. DARNELL and MARIE S. DARNELL,

Husband and Wife, as joint tenants,

the real property in the

County of San Diego

State of California, described as follows:

The Southerly 150 feet of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, according to the Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, Sept. 11, 1912, said Southerly 150 feet being measured along the West line of said Lot and the North line of said portion of said Lot being parallel with the Southerly line thereof.

Dated December 7, 1955.

*Cecile M. Cole*

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF

San Diego

SS.

On 12-7-55 before me, the undersigned a Notary Public in and for said County and State, personally appeared

E. S. COLE and CECILE M. COLE,

known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that they executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.



*Stephen Naples*  
Notary Public in and for said County and State.

WHEN RECORDED, PLEASE MAIL THIS INSTRUMENT TO  
Mr. and Mrs. William I. Darnell

5628 Roberson St. San Diego, Calif.

ORDER No. ESCROW No.

SPACE BELOW FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY

DOCUMENT No. 799  
RECORDED AT REQUEST OF  
SECURITY TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY

JAN 4 1956

at 9:00 A.M.  
BOOK 5925 PAGE 483

OFFICIAL RECORDS  
County of San Diego, California

For \$2.00  
ROGER N. HOWE, County Recorder

By *W. H. M.* Deputy

RECORDING REQUESTED BY

MAIL TAX STATEMENT TO

same as below

WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

Name  
Street  
Address  
City  
State  
Zip  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Schmalz  
6628 Nokomis  
La Mesa, California

94238

FILE/PAGE NO.  
BOOK 187  
RECORDED REQUEST OF  
LOUISVILLE TITLE COMPANY

MAY 7 9:00AM '71

OFFICIAL RECORDS  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIF.  
HARLEY F. BLOOM  
RECORDER

\$2.00

ORDER NO.  
ESCROW NO. 103,166

RECORDERS USE ONLY

**GRANT DEED**  
(INDIVIDUAL)

DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX \$ 41.80  
☒ COMPUTED ON FULL VALUE OF PROPERTY CONVEYED, OR  
☐ COMPUTED ON FULL VALUE LESS LIENS & ENCUMBRANCES  
REMAINING THEREON AT TIME OF SALE.  
Louisville Title Co. by: J. A. McDonald  
Signature of declarant or agent determining tax - Firm Name  
Unincorporated Area ☒ City of La Mesa

TRANSFER TAX PAID  
HARLEY F. BLOOM, COUNTY RECORDER

WILLIAM I. DARNELL and MARIE S. DARNELL,

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, DO HEREBY GRANT TO

FREDERICK A. SCHMALZ and GAIL T. SCHMALZ,  
husband and wife, as joint tenants

the real property in the County of San Diego State of California, described as:

PARCEL 1:  
That portion of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, in the City of La Mesa, County of San Diego,  
State of California, according to Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the County Recorder's  
Office September 11, 1912 described as follows:

Beginning at the Southeast corner of said Lot; thence along the Easterly line thereof  
North 17° 59' East 81.99 feet and North 15° 16' West 74.66 feet to the Northeast corner  
of the land conveyed to William I. Darnell et ux, by deed recorded January 4, 1956 in Book  
5925 page 483 of Official Records; thence South 89° 48' West along the Northerly  
line of said land 176.52 feet; thence South 22° 37' 57" East 162.27 feet to the  
Southerly line of said Lot 19; thence North 89° 48' East along said Southerly line  
108.42 feet to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING

PARCEL 2:

An easement for sewer lines and for purposes incidental thereto over, under, along and across  
a strip of land 4.00 feet wide lying within Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, in the City of La Mesa,  
County of San Diego, State of California, according to Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the  
office of the County Recorder September 11, 1912 the Northerly line of said 4.00 foot strip  
being described as follows:

Beginning at the Northwestern corner of Parcel 1 above; thence along the Northerly line  
of said Darnell land, South 89° 48' 00" West 80.00 feet to the Westerly line of Lot 19.  
The Easterly terminus of the Southerly line of said 4.00 foot strip is to be prolonged  
so as to terminate in the Westerly line of Parcel 1 above.

Dated: April 5, 1971

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF San Diego

On April 6, 1971

before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said  
County and State, personally appeared

William I. Darnell and  
Marie S. Darnell

known to me to be the persons whose names are  
subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that  
they executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Mary Ann Staggs  
Notary Public in and for said County and State.

William I. Darnell  
William I. Darnell

Marie S. Darnell  
Marie S. Darnell

Notary Seal



MAIL TAX STATEMENT AS DIRECTED ABOVE

1989 Schmalz, to Mari Bisbee

RECORDING REQUESTED BY  
**RECORDING REQUESTED BY**  
**CALIFORNIA COAST TITLE**

AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL THIS DEED AND, UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN BELOW, MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO

NAME  
 ADDRESS  
 CITY & STATE  
 ZIP

WILMA E. MCGRATH, et al  
 3628 N. KOMIS STREET  
 LA MESA, CALIF. 91942

Title Order No. 52618-A Escrow No. 17647-CS

DOC # 1993-0782841  
 19-NOV-1993 03:59 PM

OFFICIAL RECORDS  
 SAN DIEGO COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE  
 ANNETTE EVANS, COUNTY RECORDER

RF: 4.00 FEES: 183.00  
 AF: 3.00  
 PF: 1.00  
 UF: 10.00  
 TAX: 165.00

1396

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

## GRANT DEED

The undersigned declares that the documentary transfer tax is 165.00 and is  
☒ computed on the full value of the interest or property conveyed, or is  
☐ computed on the full value less the value of liens or encumbrances remaining thereon at the time of sale. The land, tenements  
 or realty is located in  
☐ unincorporated area ☒ city of LA MESA and

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,

MARI BISBEE

hereby GRANTS to

WILMA E. MCGRATH, an unmarried woman, as to an undivided 75% interest and ROBERT  
 F. MOONEY, an unmarried man as to an undivided 25% interest, as tenants in common,  
 the following described real property in the City of LA MESA, County of SAN  
 DIEGO, State of California:

Parcel 1: that portion of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, in the City of La Mesa,  
 County of San Diego, State of California, according to Map thereof No.  
 1475, filed in the County Recorder's Office, September 11, 1912. (As more  
 particularly described in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made a part hereof.)

Dated OCTOBER 1, 1993

*Mari Bisbee*  
 MARI BISBEE

Arizona  
 STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
 COUNTY OF Maricopa } ss

On October 1, 1993 before me, a Notary  
 Public in and for said State, personally  
 appeared MARI BISBEE, personally known to me (or  
 proved to me on the basis of satisfactory  
 evidence) to be the person whose name is  
 subscribed to the within instrument and  
 acknowledged to me that he executed the same in  
 his authorized capacity, and that by his  
 signature on the instrument the person, or the  
 entity on behalf of which the person acted,  
 executed the instrument.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature [Signature] / 7-17-94

FOR NOTARY SEAL OR STAMP



Assessor's Parcel No. 490-403-32

MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO PARTY SHOWN ON FOLLOWING LINE: IF NO PARTY SO SHOWN, MAIL AS DIRECTED ABOVE

SAME AS ABOVE

Name

Street Address

City & State

OFFICIAL RECORDS, ANNETTE J. EVANS, SAN DIEGO RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

RECORDING REQUESTED BY  
SOUTHLAND TITLE OF SAN DIEGO  
AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL THIS DEED AND, UNLESS  
OTHERWISE SHOWN BELOW, MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO:

MS. R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY  
5628 NOKOMIS STREET  
LA MESA CA, 91942

DOC # 1999-0439027

6881

Jun 23, 1999 3:37 PM

OFFICIAL RECORDS  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE  
GREGORY J. SMITH, COUNTY RECORDER

FEES: 278.50  
OC: OC



1999-0439027

S LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

A.P.N 490-403-32

Title Order No. 80815-31

Escrow or Loan No. LM02458C

## GRANT DEED

THE UNDERSIGNED GRANTOR(S) DECLARE(S)

DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX is \$ 258.50 CITY TAX \$ 0.00

- ☒ computed of full value of property conveyed, or  
☐ computed on full value less value of liens or encumbrances remaining at time of sale,  
☐ Unincorporated area: X City of LA MESA

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged WILMA E. McGRATH, Trustee, and any successor Trustee under Declaration of Trust dated December 22, 1993.;

hereby GRANT(S) to R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY; an unmarried woman

the following described property, in the County of San Diego. State of California:

PARCEL 1:

That portion of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, in the City of La Mesa, County of San Diego, State of California, according to Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the Office of the County Recorder of San Diego County, September 11, 1912, as more particularly described in the attached marked Exhibit "A" comprising of one (1) page and incorporated herein by this reference.

Dated: May 20, 1999

Wilma E. McGrath  
WILMA E. McGRATH, Trustee

State of California

County Of Alameda } SS.

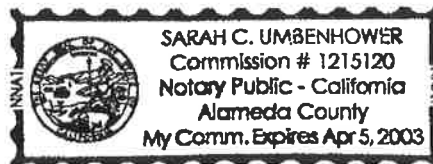
On 6-14-99 before me, Sarah C. Umbenhower

personally appeared Wilma E. McGrath

personally known to me (or proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence) to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same is his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature Sarah C. Umbenhower



(This area for official notarial seal)

MAIL TAX STATEMENTS AS DIRECTED ABOVE

RECORDING REQUESTED BY:  
Stewart Title Company

AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:

JEFFREY S. KLEVE et al.  
5628 Nokomis Street  
La Mesa, CA 91942

Order No.: 250127-02  
Escrow No.: LME0301918-JW  
A.P.N.: 490-403-32-00

17889

DOC # 2004-1095926



NOV 18, 2004 3:25 PM

OFFICIAL RECORDS  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE  
GREGORY J. SMITH, COUNTY RECORDER

FEES: 614.00

OC: OC

PAGES: 2



SPACE ABOVE  
**GRANT DEED**

THE UNDERSIGNED GRANTOR(S) DECLARE(S)  
DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX IS \$594.00

- [ X ] computed on full value of property conveyed, or  
[] computed on full value less value of liens or encumbrances remaining at time of sale.  
[] unincorporated area [ X ] City of La Mesa

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,  
**R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY, TRUSTEE of the R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST, dated April 7, 2004.**

hereby GRANT(S) to ~~JEFFREY S. KLEVE and~~ **VINCENT H. URSILLO**, a single man and **JEFFREY S. KLEVE**,  
a single man as joint tenants

the following described real property in the County of **San Diego**, State of California

That portion of Lot 19 of BRIER TRACT, in the City of La Mesa, County of **San Diego**, State of California, according to Map thereof No. 1475, filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Diego County September 11, 1912, as more particularly described on the attached description and made a part hereof.

Dated: **September 8, 2004**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF San Diego

} ss.

On November 15, 2004 before me

Janet Wray  
a Notary Public in and for said County and State, personally appeared

R. Samantha Attebery

personally known to me (or proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence) to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies) and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s), acted, executed the instrument.

WITNESS my hand and official seal

Signature

Signature of Notary

**R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY, TRUSTEE of the R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST, dated April 7, 2004.**

R. Samantha Attebery  
By: **R. SAMANTHA ATTEBERY, TRUSTEE**

Trustee



(This area for official notary seal)

**MAIL TAX STATEMENTS AS DIRECTED ABOVE**



The late Lloyd Ruocco, in a 1978 photo, next to a mural painted in his honor at Design Center.

## Restored Building a Tribute to Architect

By HILLIARD HARPER  
Times Staff Writer

**S**AN DIEGO—When a March 1987 fire destroyed a section of a tree-shrouded building in Hillcrest, a distinguished local architect offered his services for "practically nothing" to draw plans to restore the structure.

For architect Leon and Vertzer, developing a set of plans from scratch for the building where he once worked from 1965 to 1985 was a labor of love. Located at 3611 5th Ave. and built in 1950, the Design Center is actually a vintage piece of Modernist architecture.

Vertzer calls the subtle, split-level glass, redwood and steel "box" that steps easily from 5th

Avenue into a canyon, an icon in this county and this city. It takes into account the neighborhood, the aspect of the site, the molding of the land, the contouring. It's a very special place that should be protected and preserved.

Working without the benefit of blueprints, Vertzer carefully crafted a set of plans using memory and photographs. Construction on the \$200,000 restoration project was recently completed.

Vertzer's efforts were as much a tribute to the memory of the building's original architect, the late Lloyd Ruocco, as they were an attempt to preserve this exceptional structure.

Ruocco was a visionary with an abiding concern for the future of San Diego's urban development,

according to those architects who knew him. He was, they say, a rare inspiration, a philosopher-architect who knew how to blend Modernism to San Diego's geography and special climate rather than impose the style on it.

He was a talented, graceful, sensitive man, slight of build, soft-spoken, very articulate, Vertzer said. But he couldn't get many people to listen to his message. His real legacy was one of ideas. His influence was not so much as a designer to be revered or copied, but rather his ideas and sensitivities of the city as a place to live and work and play, particularly as a happy, nurturing environment for children.

Ruocco, who died in 1981 of

Please see RUOCCO, Page 9

# RUOCCO: A Tribute to Late San Diego Architect

*Continued from Page 9*

young architects just out of college. Here was a mature architect who still held to his ideals. Not surprisingly, the Ruoccos influenced a number of those who are the senior architects, landscape architects and interior designers in San Diego today.

"I think Lloyd's influence on San Diego architects was profound. I know it was to me," said Fred Liebhardt, of Liebhardt Weston & Associates. Liebhardt moved to San Diego in the early 1950s, following a stint with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin in Arizona, and soon took a position with Ruocco, whom he considered "a complete original."

Other prominent architects of the time, he said, were not doing original work, but their versions of someone else's work.

Architect Robert Mosher of Mosher, Drew Watson, Ferguson Architects agreed. Mosher said that Ruocco was the one San Diego architect that young architects like himself were attracted to.

"He was the person to whom you turned for inspiration," Mosher said. "He was the modernist. There were no others. While others thought they were, he *was*. He had the brilliance, vision, creativity and background to be the leader of the *avant garde*."

"He was out there as an example that it could be done, that you could be a true believer, if you will, [in yourself]. He and a guy by the name of Sim Bruce Richards were the San Diego gurus. He was at the height of his power at a totally unique time in modern history."

Homer Delawie, now a partner in the firm of Delawie, Bretton, Wilkes Associates, is another who was drawn to Ruocco.

"Truthfully, I can't believe that any young architect who was around Lloyd in 1950 or 1960 was not influenced by him," Delawie said. "A young person would have had to be really in-grown not to have recognized that there was something different going on there and that it was really worthwhile."

You'd have to be blind to have missed that.

"Other people here were doing good work, and in some ways better than Lloyd. But in terms of significance, he was running through the bull rushes ahead of the rest of the pack. He stomped down a lot of bull rushes."

Despite his apparent genius, Ruocco was missing an essential element that kept him from seeing his ideas through to reality.

"There was one facet of Lloyd that was sort of missing in there," said Liebhardt, "that made the connection between what I consider an advanced thinker and the ability to get the hard-nose, practical, money-and-business people to further his ends. I don't think he ever got that part together."

Ruocco had a broader impact on San Diego than his relatively small catalogue of mostly residential buildings would indicate. He co-founded Citizens Coordinate for Century 3, an influential group of thinkers and leaders concerned with urban design that successfully fought a California Department of Transportation plan to widen State Highway 163 where it passes through Balboa Park.

Similarly, Ruocco initiated the move to plant ficus trees along 5th Avenue in Hillcrest between Robinson and University avenues. The softening effect of those trees transformed a district of uninteresting store fronts into a one-of-a-kind San Diego neighborhood with a special village ambiance.

Ironically, Ruocco did not like to list in his resume what was probably his largest commission, the Civic Theatre.

"It was done too fast, a very tough project for him with lots of compromises," Veitzer said.

Compromises were anathema to Ruocco, who preferred to forgo a commission rather than compromise his design. He demanded "ultimate control," said landscape architect Joe Yamada, of Wimmer Yamada & Associates.

"He was too honest [with clients], and he told them what was

wrong very clearly," said Kaiser, of the San Diego Union. "I think his vision was uncompromised by politics. He was an architect. He dealt with beauty and form and the people in the building. Politics was extraneous. That was not popular in 1960 San Diego."

Most of Ruocco's buildings are small, inventive and suit the people they were designed for, Veitzer said.

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

The "Ruocco house" designation is a testament to a specific kind of architecture that seems to fit the environment like a glove. It reflects a basic approach to shelter, characterized by simplicity, lack of ornamentation, and a respect for natural, traditional building materials: wood, brick, glass, concrete.

The same could be said for his larger buildings such as the Design Center. Rather than build up from the canyon's edge, or fill in the ravine, Ruocco designed a split level glass box—one story at street level—that steps down into what once was a quiet canyon filled with eucalyptus trees. It offered city workers a touch of nature in an urban environment.

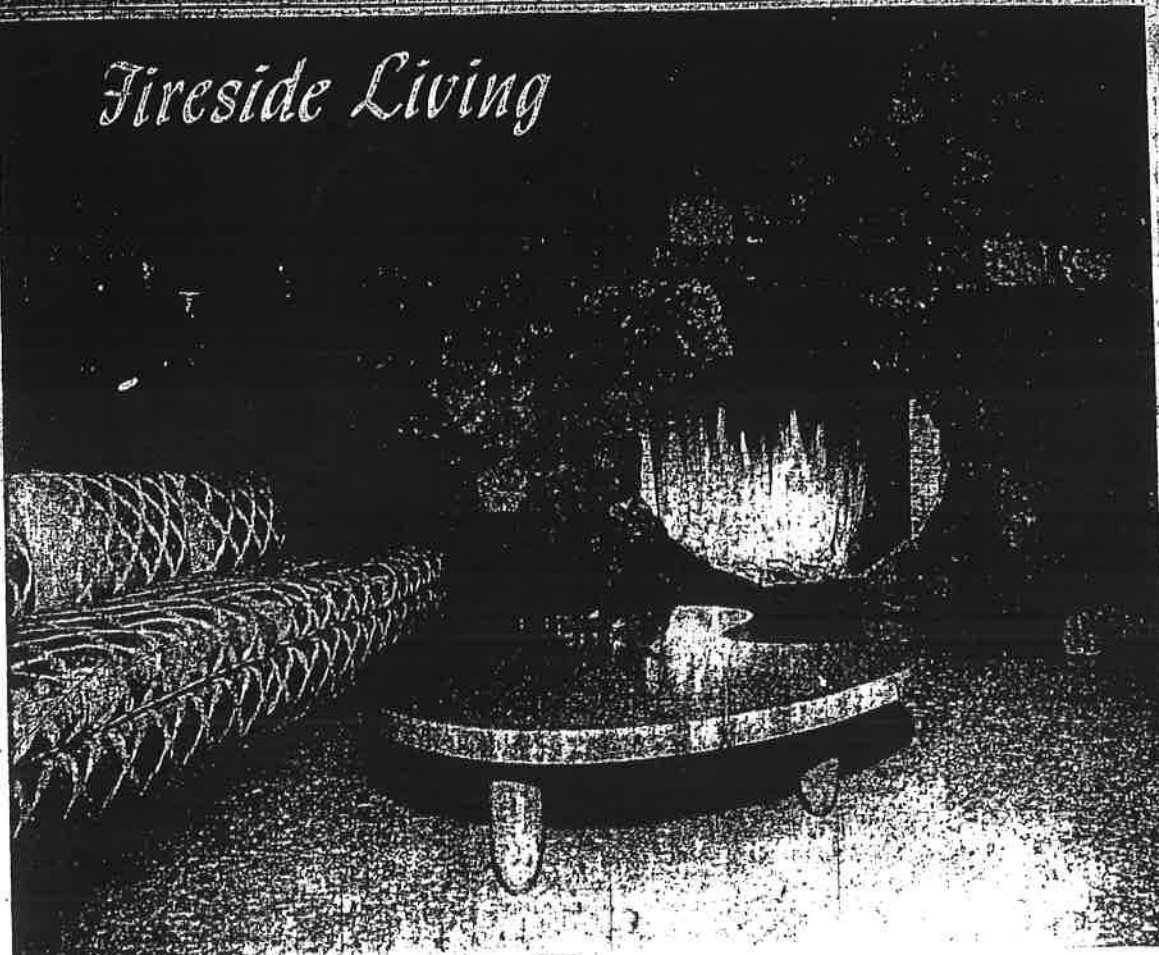
The floor to ceiling glass walls at the back of the building are actually sliding doors that eliminate the barrier between inside and outside.

"If it's a cloudy, blustery day, you have a sense of that. If it's a sunny day, that comes inside," said tenant Terry Tucker.

"There was something special about walking down that wooden stairway," Veitzer recalled. After a dozen steps, it felt like the city was behind you."

Now a new apartment project is going up across the canyon on 6th Avenue. A large parking garage stands where the eucalyptus trees once were. The developers say it's an improvement. But you can almost hear Lloyd Ruocco saying a few things to the developer about designing for the environment.

## Fireside Living

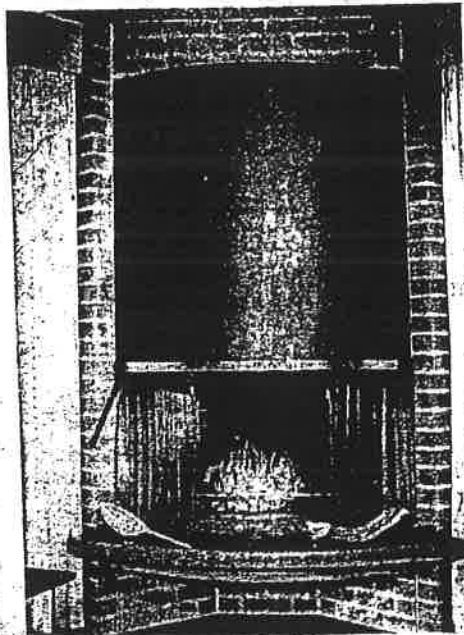


Oval shaped fireplace set into massive wall of granite gives an unusual but deeply warming charm to the music room in the home

of Mr. and Mrs. R. Marvin Jackson, at 4421 Mayapan Dr., in Grossmont area.—San Diego Union Staff Photos by Les Dodds.



Wide split brick fireplace rises from floor in home of Mr. and Mrs. Budvarson, 9530 Sunset Ave. — S



The flue is heavy black iron, which radiates heat. In corner fireplace in the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Cole, 5628 Nakomis St., La Mesa. Note also the cantilevered raised hearth of poured concrete.

### MEMO TO SAINT NICHOLAS:

## Surprises In S.D. Fireplaces

By CLYDE SMITH  
The San Diego Union's Homes and Building Writer

This week we thought it might be a good idea to check up on the fireplace situation in San Diego.

Santa's pretty busy right now and we figured it would be a bit helpful if the good saint had advance warning of what's new when he climbs down San Diego chimneys on the popular eve.

About the only thing we are sure of now is that Santa, as old and wise as he may be, faces some surprises.

#### It Takes Imagination

If we had any idea when we started this venture of finding and defining the popular trend in fireplace construction, we lost it in the confusion. About the only definition you can give to design in fireplaces is imagination.

Fireplaces apparently inspire imagination.

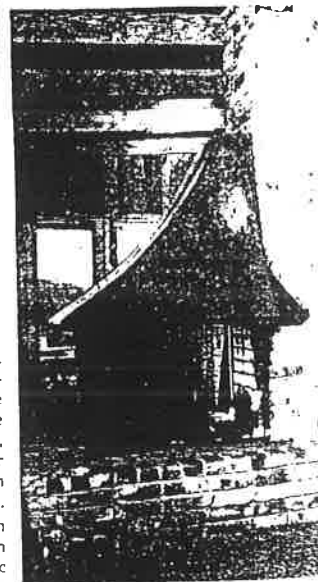
We fear that Santa, before he finishes his San Diego rounds the night of Dec. 24, may suspect that, in some cases, imagination is running wild.

#### Pseudo Hearth In Disfavor

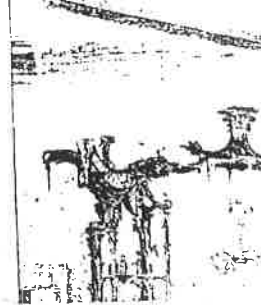
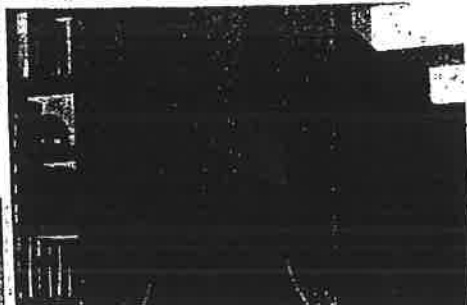
Fireplace variety is so great that about the only attributes common to all fireplaces is a place to build a fire and a flue to carry the smoke away. Of course, there are many false fireplaces in San Diego, built two or more decades ago solely for ornamental purposes. But the modern fireplace is real. You can build a fire in it.

Fireplaces in the modern home can dominate the room, and often do, with an overwhelming display of rugged, rustic exposed masonry. Or they can be unobtrusive and inconspicuous. Some fireplaces are tucked in the walls, almost hidden.

(Continued on Page 12, col. 1)

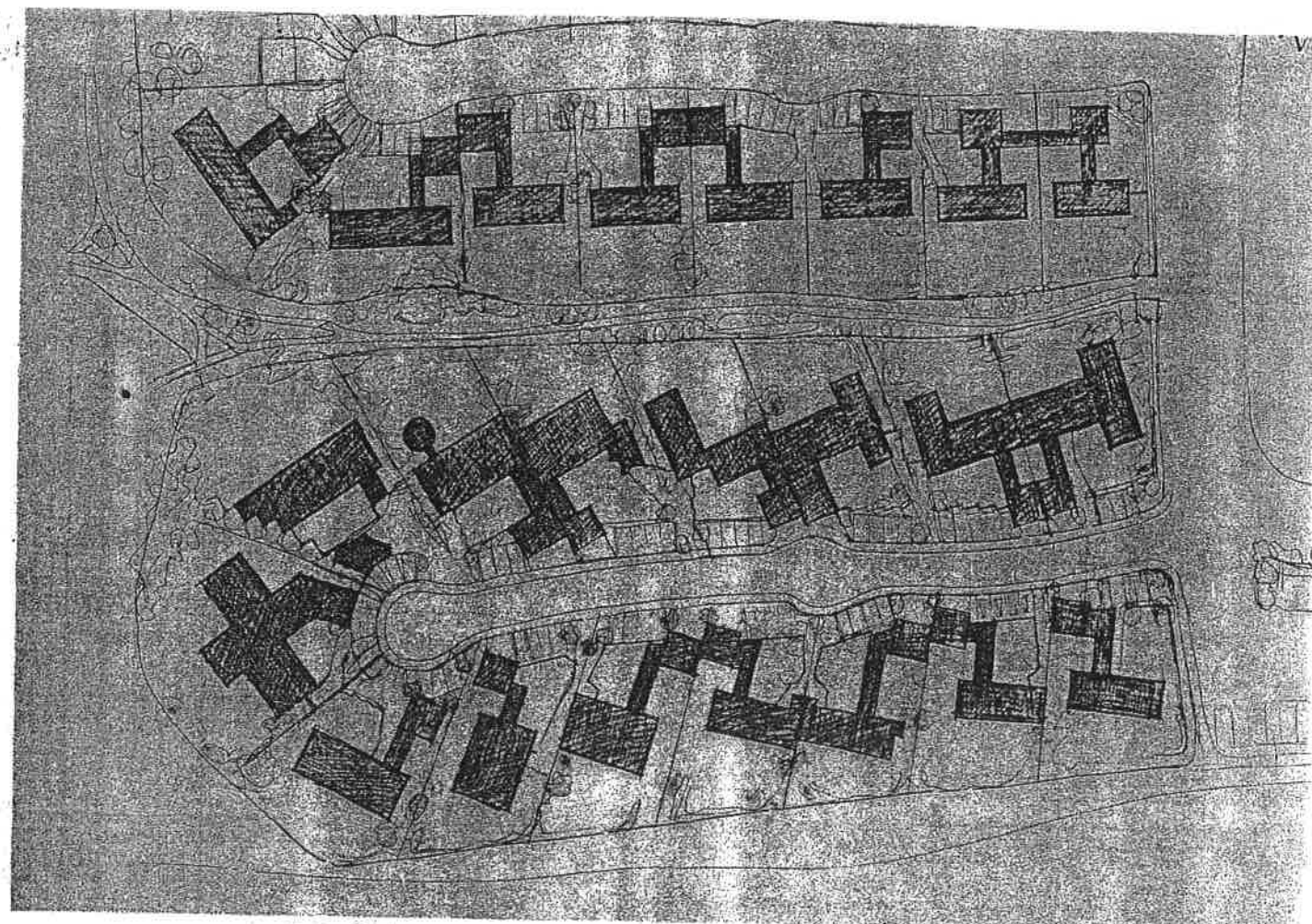


This raised hearth fireplace with the middle of the room at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Budvarson. Masonry wall of used brick.



85/6 + wings

2



Here are seen the keys to coherent neighborhood design: the short dead-end street and the parklike kinderpath. The street frankly serves only automobile. The path serves only people (and pets). Neighborly relations are possible across the street but are more likely to develop across the

# RUOCCO'S GARDEN CITY

by LLOYD RUOCCO A. I. A.

SKETCHES FOR A BETTER WAY OF LIVING

**A** SUBJECT which has always interested me is how you could build cities that would be fit to live in. That may sound like an irascible statement because of all the money we've spent building cities—and of course everybody thinks of the city he lives in. I too own property here and have made my contribution in taxes. Nevertheless I think the American city is a relatively dull place in which to live. It could be considered dull in two ways—either by comparing with what is known about designing cities to fit the 20th century, or by comparing with the art and architectural and other rich qualities, the humanistic qualities, of historical cities that weren't just based upon the modern technological fastbuck idiom.

What is it we miss in the contemporary city? What would be some of the things you could do to make living in a city more exciting, more efficient; more gay

merely physical. It has to do with resolving the mental roadblocks and hazards that we build up.

There should be a feeling of quality about a city. It shouldn't be merely the left over result of various business deals. It should have an enriched atmosphere like a garden. Most people are up to the point of loving a garden. Too few of them are up to the point of working in a garden or giving up other things to pay for the garden.

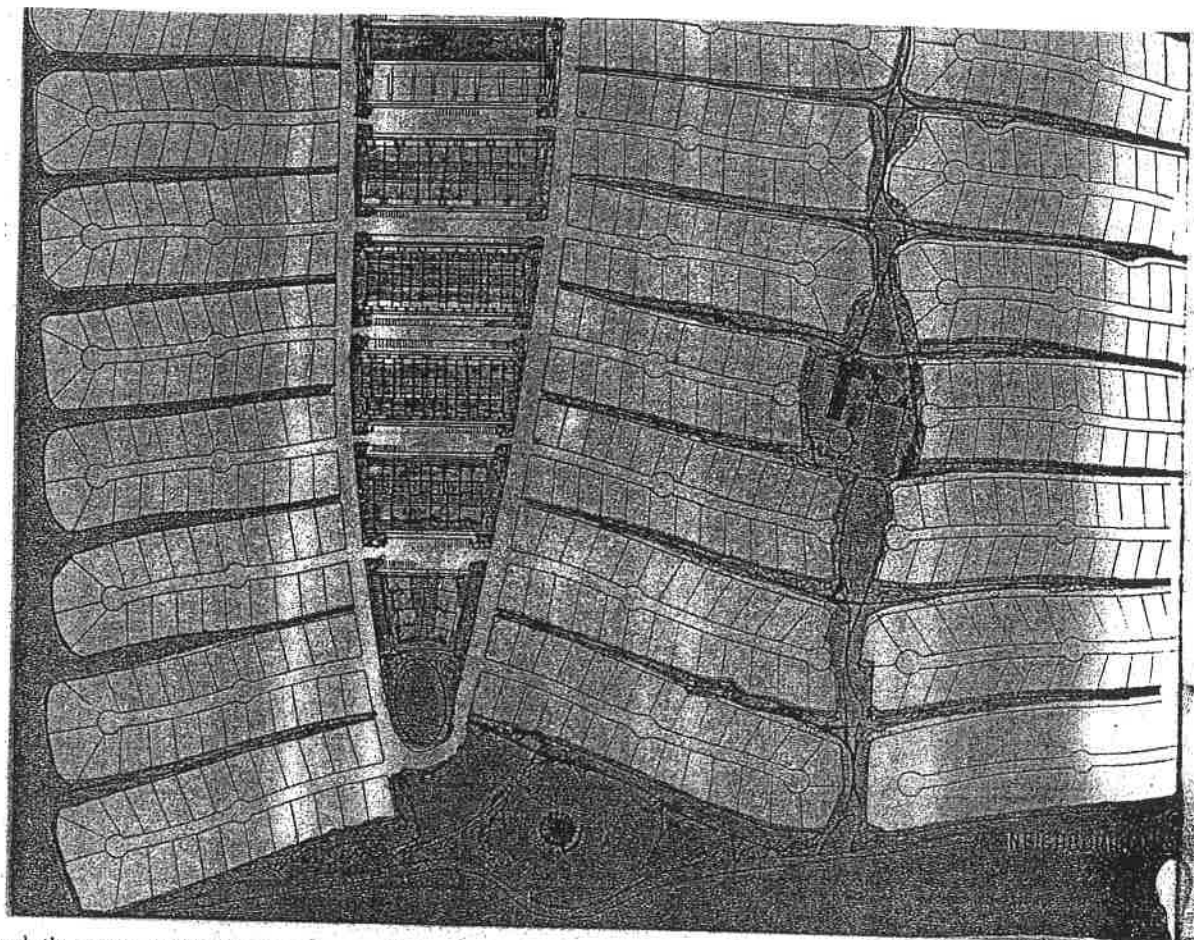
When it comes to architecture and the civic things, we as a nation, I believe, are backward. There's no point of criticizing us up to this moment. The only criticism we can make stick is about the future. Let us say we are thoroughly excused—condoned and not condemned for our elaborate past which was full of chasing Indians and stealing the resources and building the cities and doing all the other big things we've done. It was a

our schooling, all our research, all our technology. But now we are coming, I think, to a new phase, a phase represented by vast amounts of money stacked up.

The problem which we have sedulously avoided in the United States is the act of building a city, a new city right on fresh ground. We do have the money ready to build these cities, though we don't know it yet. We also have the incentives to build these cities, you know, as we now have incentive to build space ships because the Russians sent up a Sputnik. As we get to know more about it we're going to learn that the Russians have built new cities in a perfectly slapdash manner all over their country. Now they're not efficient in the sense that we want our cities to be efficient, efficient in the sense that they're delightful places to live and work and do commerce.

The essence of the American city since

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE COMMUNITY



ing up the dead-end streets and the green paths, Architect Ruocco first composed neighborhoods (above) and then superblocks (next page). The neighborhood is a two-faced thing, turning inward upon path and park, turning outward toward a tongue of land supporting apartment houses, shops and entertainment enterprises. The superblock (8-12,000 persons) is a collection of neighborhoods with a central park in which tools for various age levels are located, the whole surrounded by freeways which in turn link superblocks together into a city.

Specially in the phase when they're going to raise their families. I think it's a natural and a desirable goal since we have a lot of land in the country. In designing a house, we should begin with the smallest unit. And the smallest unit, humanly speaking, is the baby.

In the model city presented in these sketches, the houses were designed on a basic basis. They don't follow any style. They're simply sensible floor plans arranged in an area with three gardens. There is one garden for the adults, and the garden of the adult living is at one end of the house so they can have some privacy, where the entertaining can take place. It includes a patio which is wind-free, private both from the children and from the street, and tied in with the living rooms or the pretty rooms of the house. At the other end of the house, the children's rooms and the family room will face out into a garden of their own arranged for the more rugged uses indicated. We have the two gardens penetrated by a glass kitchen on the theory that since there are a lot of chores to be done in the kitchen it should be the best room in the house as regards sunlight and garden view and so on. So we make the kitchen a long peninsula of glass, enabling the mother to be in the

center of everything. So you have two segments to the house, you divide and conquer your frustrations. These are modest houses and they could be expanded to more elaborate domains but I'm not interested here in the wealthy. I'm interested in average families, trying to figure out what would be a sensible plan for them.

The third garden is what you might call the landscape garden. It gives the family a large open area on to which all the main rooms in the house look, and that can be landscaped in a way that you might call creative. It could have an intense grove of trees or a mall area bordered by complicated alcoves with shade, and so on. It is a non-functional area designed to be beautiful and to give you a sense of space, very much as the English country mansions had.

A significant thing about this plan is that the entire interior is arranged with demountable units that do not support the roof. During the natural change in the needs of the family, the interior of the house can be modified very easily. Also the lot arrangement is such that additions to the house could be made.

One of the features is that the houses could be grouped together in pairs on either side of a soundproof masonry wall,

a wall which would give at one and the same time a fire barrier, a sound barrier and a sense of solidity. Thus you have double the usual side yard, a usable space opposite the wall. For purposes of working up the concept on paper, I assumed a lot size of 75 feet width and 100 feet depth.

The entrances of the houses would be in most cases grouped in pairs, as would be the garages or carports. The street is purposely made too narrow for automobiles and children to play together. All parking is off the street. The cars turn in at right angles rather than park along the curb, and this turns out to be quite an advantage when the flow of visitors is heavy. The streets are all dead-end.

### COME IN 20TH CENTURY

I should mention that this plan has elements originated by sturdy 19th century Englishmen, Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard and by others who felt that the 20th century was coming in with a great deal of noise and traffic, and people should do something big about it, not just fuddle along.

One thing that makes the modern city look goofy is the visibility of houses. Ninety-nine percent of all houses built

are designed by a contractor scribbling on the kitchen counter of his preceding house, or by overnight draftsmen at \$25 each. That's how the tracts are built. If the tracts looked elite and beautiful and knowledgeable from an esthetic point of view, I would give them my vote because I like places to look fine even if they are awkward to live in. My question is why do we live? Do we live for comfort, or do we live for moments of exhilaration?

### PLEASE ACCEPT

So I ask you to accept the idea that the street should be made up of open carports and fences and no houses shown. Eight-foot fences can be fascinating, cheap or expensive, whichever you wish, but mainly they should be planted out. When you look down this street you should see trees coming over fences, vines growing on fences, planting in front of fences—a modest-width street with right angle parking. The signature on the street front would not be the goofiness of your architecture, but a hand-sculptured piece, a creation in glass and wire or something that you had done yourself as a matter of self expression.

In place of the alleys which now

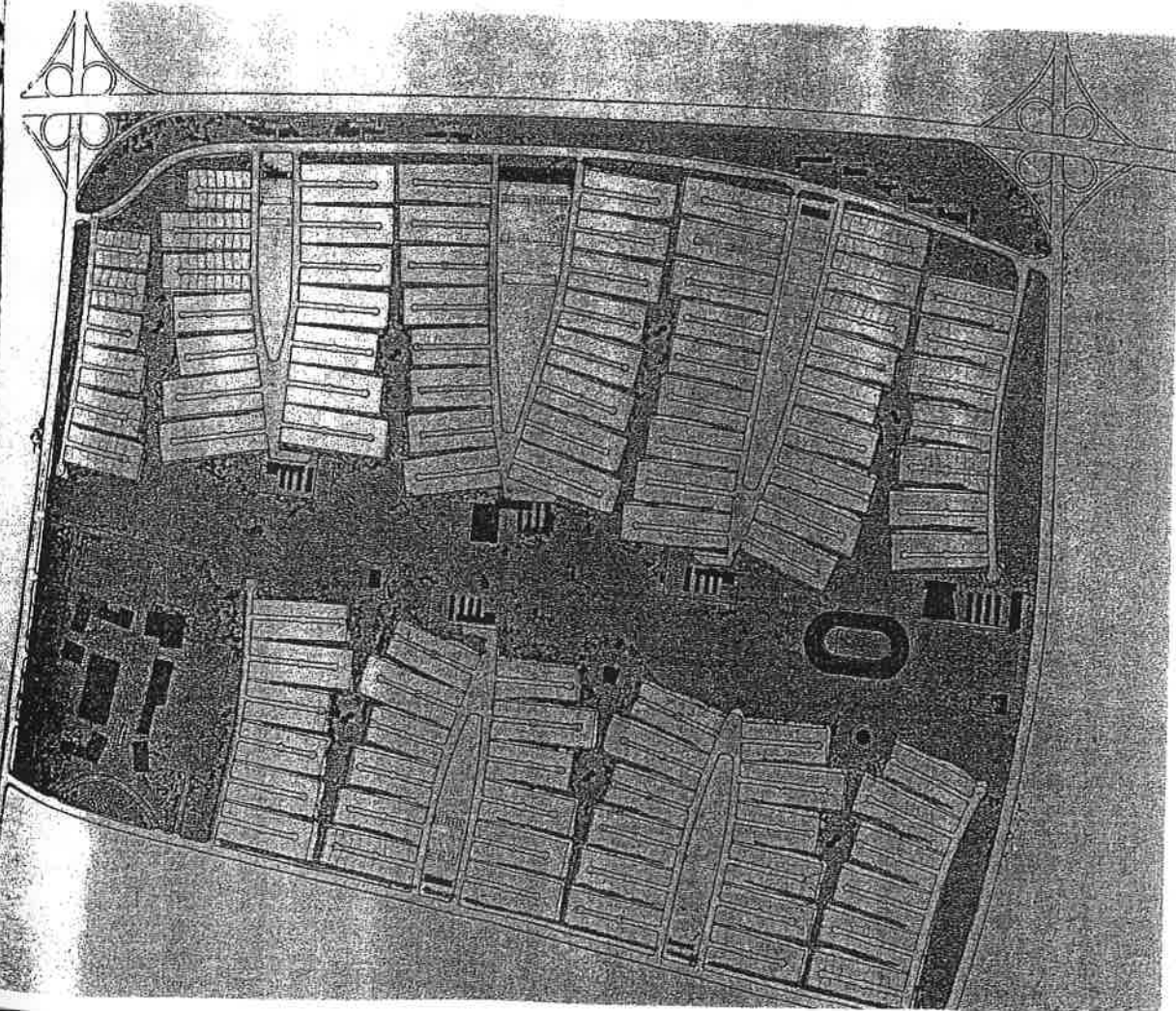
usually occur where back yards meet, in this plan we have an area across which neighborhood relations can naturally flower. Through it runs what I call a *kinderpath*, for children, barred to cars. As you may see in drawing 3, the *kinderpaths* from several adjoining blocks converge upon a central playground for the younger children. As I have just said, the "front" is completely fenced in with locked gates so the youngsters cannot get mixed up with traffic. The children naturally are drawn to this path, in which there are wide places for small games enroute to a neighborhood playground, at which point may also be located a kindergarten or child care center. Following the drawings, it may be seen that each of the child care centers in turn connects by foot or bicycle path with an elementary school. In the center of each superblock (drawing 4) is a junior high school, and near one boundary a high school, the latter accessible either by highway or through the car-free interior of the super block.

Adults and teen-agers of course, can go through the gates, jump in their cars and roll out into traffic in the usual manner. But they can also go pedestrian through the *kinderpaths* if they like. Neighbor-

hood relations are more likely to develop across the *kinderpath* than across the streets, reversing the present situation.

I think in this scheme we have developed a fluidity for family growth. If older people wish, they may stay in these houses after the children have grown up and left. Or they may want to shrink down into a small garden apartment. For them, interspersed as shown in drawing 4, are wedge-shaped domains accommodating neighborhood stores and apartment houses, doctors' offices, etc. Notice that these are close to the boundaries of the superblocks and thus handy to public transit. Their narrow ends open out onto a large park that runs through the middle of the superblock. Not only oldsters but all the diversified types who prefer apartment living could find their quarters here. The stores would not be super supermarkets but quickie places where you pick up the things you were told to bring home and forgot.

Traffic in these densely built up wedges would be possibly as heavy as in a large shopping center parking lot, but there would be no problem of speeding cars. At the end of each wedge there'd be space for some outdoor pleasantries, open-air restaurants, perhaps. A church or



4

...the great central superblock park.  
 Assuming that a circular linkage of  
 superblocks is the most efficient form for  
 "nuclear city," we plan a major shop-  
 ping center in one corner of each super-  
 block. By alternating these corners, as  
 shown in drawing 5, a maximum number  
 of motorized shoppers are served off the  
 ways that bound the superblocks.  
 Superblocks are geared to residential  
 use almost exclusively. String a bunch  
 of them together as shown and you  
 have an area that logically would have  
 industry, offices and supershopping, bi-  
 tted more likely than not by a cross-

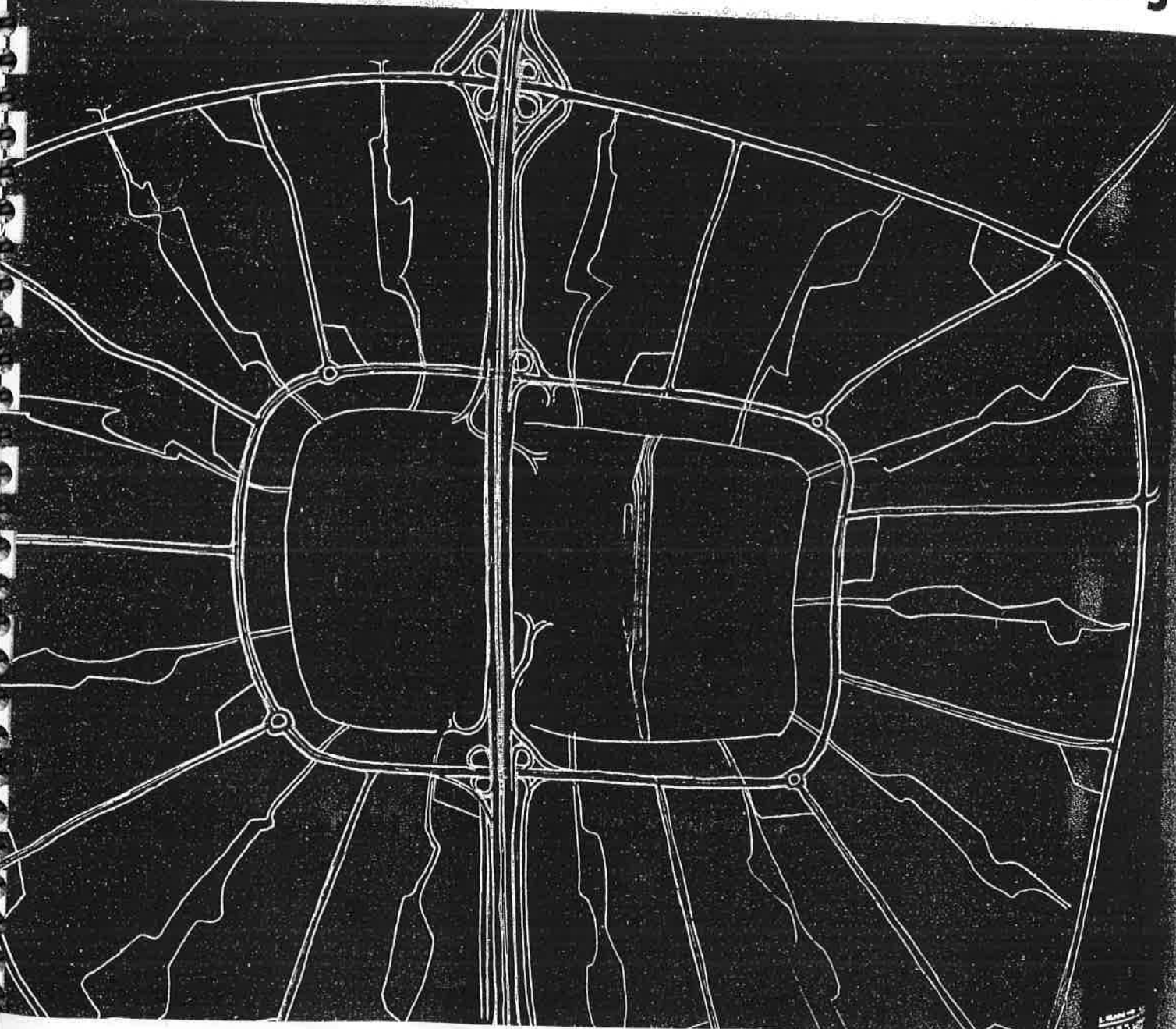
superblock has its green park core, so the  
 central district would have a greenbelt  
 park setting it off from the intensively  
 developed "downtown."

If the seeds of such a plan were  
 planted in a great plain such as the present  
 city of Los Angeles is built on, you  
 would be able to make a great metropolis  
 by linking together a chain of "nuclear  
 cities" just as a nuclear city is made by  
 linking together a chain of superblocks.  
 Variations on the theme could be worked  
 out for more rugged territory such as  
 surrounds San Diego.

What I have been discussing is a city

where children can walk to school. Parents are  
 encouraged to walk too, or to use elec-  
 tric runabouts within park-like settings,  
 away from auto traffic. At this pace,  
 neighbors might get to know and appreci-  
 ate each other instead of always hurrying  
 by because they are caught up in a  
 brutal pace. Thus there might be a real  
 chance of developing natural democratic  
 government, literally at the grassroots  
 level. People would take pride in main-  
 taining not only their home grounds but  
 their neighborhood, their superblock and  
 their city because each of these would be  
 precious and worth preserving.

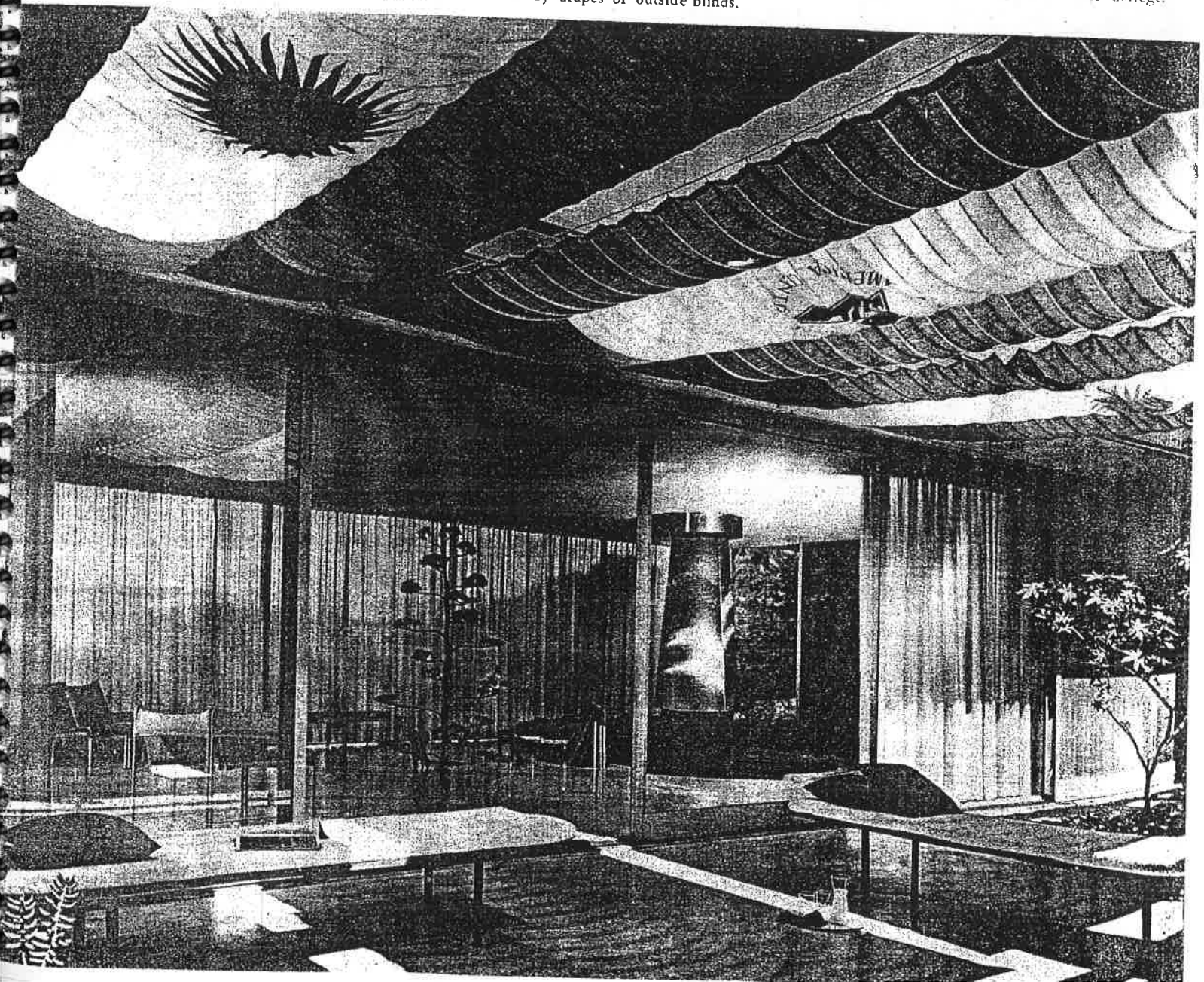
"nuclear city" has nothing to do with bombs as Architect Ruocco has planned it, but is an organic arrangement of superblocks around a  
 "downtown" which includes major stores, theatres, civic and sports facilities, business and light industrial establishments (150-300,000 people per  
 superblock). A similar linking together of nuclear cities would produce an orderly metropolis of two or three million with a central core containing the  
 major commercial, educational and governmental installations that would depend on such a population; heavy industry would occur on the periphery  
 of the metropolis at points dictated by terrain and requirements. This whole sequence is only a pilot study, of course, and would be subject to great  
 variation depending upon conditions.

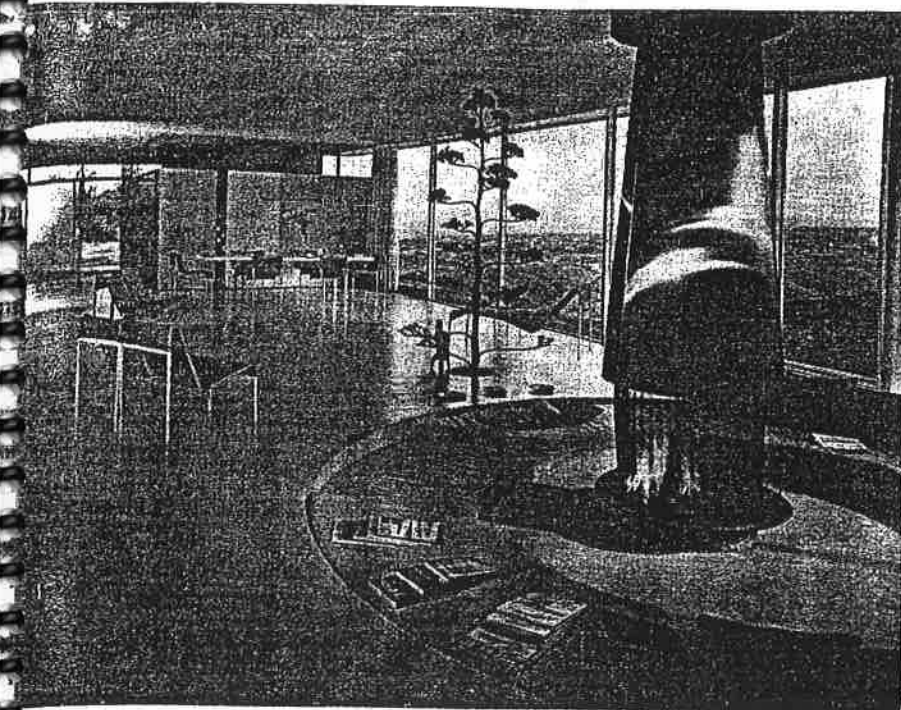


# RUOCCO'S ROOST

Is it the cure for tractitis?

Converted surplus signal flags make the patio awnings at Architect Lloyd Ruocco's own house on Toyon Road near State College. Exterior walls are nearly all glass, controlled by drapes or outside blinds.





DOUGLAS M. SIMMONDS

**L**LOYD PIETRANTONIO RUOCCO (rue-ah-ko) has a lean and hungering look which befits a man who has made it his business to pare off the excesses of civilization and grasp at the pure spirit of things. Of his architecture it surely can be said that there is never any excess. To average materialist eyes a Ruocco-designed house may seem as unattractive as an empty pantry shelf, and offhand he would seem the last man likely to emerge as a popular hero.

But let's not be offhand about Ruocco. Let's look closely at what he has achieved. I think we will discover that he is one of the best friends the common man has had west of Gandhi. The final paragraphs of our account will reveal a truly extraordinary scheme of Architect Ruocco's for taking the curse off the lowly tract house—which means practically any house these days.

First we should like to take the architect's measure in his own roost. An indifferent way of describing his house would be to say that it is "different." So different is it from its neighbors that the passing motorist looks at its location in the hills near State College and sees absolutely nothing other than greenery. The neighbors did the standard "sane" thing and built at street level, often on fill, putting up expensively dressed fronts to the public eye. Ruocco—quite contrary and seemingly perverse—dropped his house into the natural contours of the site—and that meant even the roof was below street level in this case. Thus the house simply does not exist in the world that believes in putting up a front: it cannot be seen from the street! And there is no other convenient point from which it can be seen as a whole either, for back of the house the land falls away in long rugged slopes.

On the evidence, Ruocco's roost has something in common with the concealed caves of time immemorial. But *quelle difference!* The sensitive modern's "cave" does not shut out the world. Rather the world is admitted on all sides—on Ruocco's terms. The result is a unique artistic masterpiece, outstanding even among the many wonders of American domestic

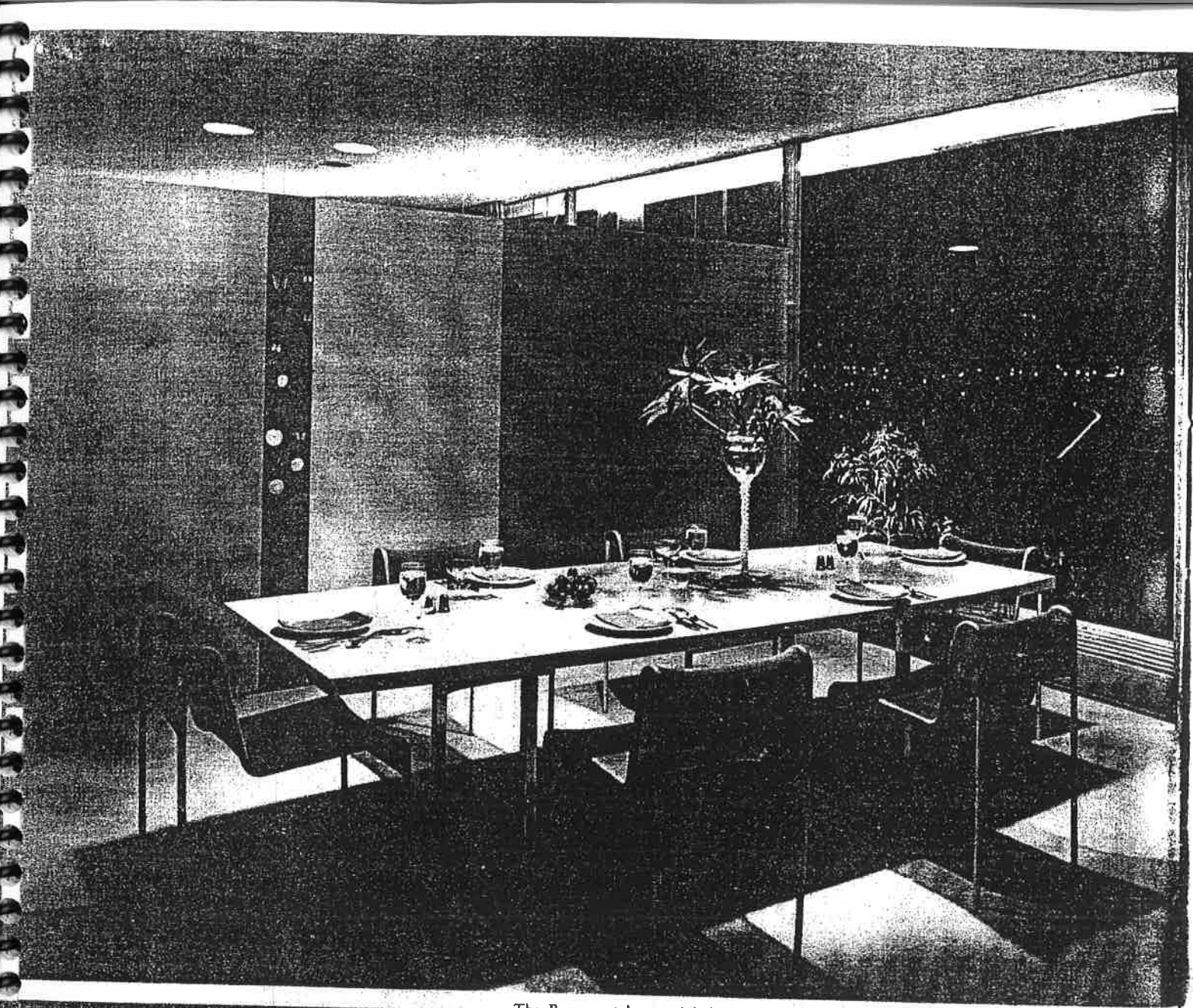
The living room is a rectangle, but you never notice it as such because of interesting vistas on all sides.

The entrance is free of pretense, just a sliding door by the carport, presided over by a John Dirks' carving.



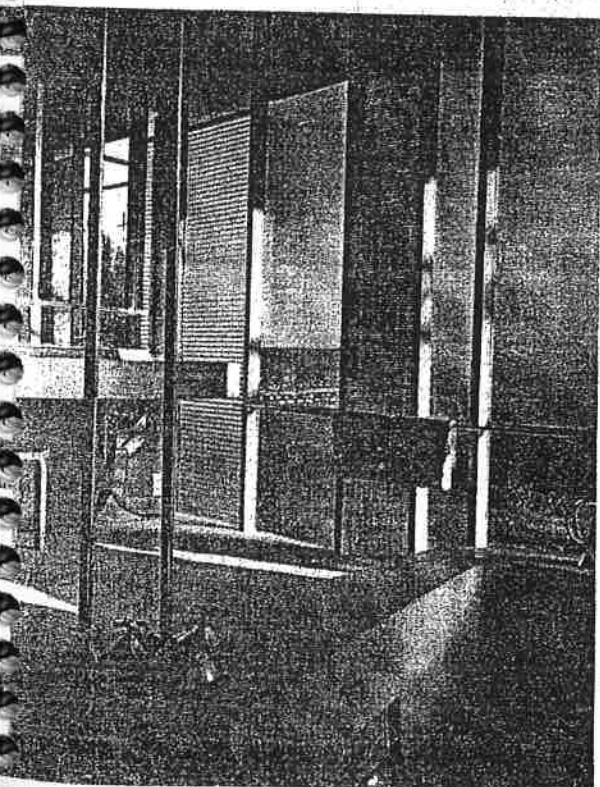
approach it with no sure idea of its dimensions, its cost or its resale value. By the time you are fumbling for the none too obvious front door you have been subtly rid of the real estate outlook and conditioned instead for a transcendental experience, believe me. When the door slides open you are confronted by infinity—a vista straight ahead, so managed with glass, lights and mysterious glimpses that you can have no idea where it all leads except inward, inward. You are now under the spell. Proceed.

Your visit should be at night if you are to capture the experiences that are here described. A fire will be boiling in a great middle of the floor pit. Naturally drawn to it, you



The Ruocos take special delight in their dining table, not so much for the food as for the decorative possibilities, reflecting the wares sold at Design Center, owned by them.

Through the imaginative bathroom window, a long view can be taken of unimaginative tract houses on the faraway hills. Ruocco's proposals to transform tract houses are discussed in this article.



EDWARD SIEVERS

gaze falls upon the northeast corner of the room you will sit up with a start because you are suddenly unsure whether you are looking into a mirror or through a clear window: the view through the glass *almost* matches the scene on this side but you don't see yourself there. Are you at last free, a disembodied spirit?

Many things about the house work thus to take you out of yourself. Your sense of balance is put on trial and your other faculties heightened. You know that you must be visually wary of boobytraps as it were, and so you are visually awake. A visitor who had not responded to the spirit of things in this house could easily smack into one of the slinky floor-to-ceiling glass panels that mockingly "separate" indoors from out.

If you are not otherwise spellbound, the hypnotic process will be completed by the gleaming stainless steel cylinder, three feet in diameter, poised above the fire, serving as the

yes, but also summing up the reality-defying quality of the house: the shiny surface picks up lights in such a way as seemingly to turn the cylinder inside out as you watch it. You'd swear it was concave, not convex in shape. Are you really outside the flue? Are you watching the fire or is the fire watching you? Are you through the looking glass? Are you a follower of Alice in Wonderland?

Observe some of the other features that have an air of suspension between reality and imagination. In the middle of the big room, imbedded in the concrete floor, is a fine specimen of the century plant, that singular growth that perhaps looks better dead than alive. It is here an elegant year-round Christmas tree, delightful with baubles at any season. A characteristic Ruocco touch is partitions that seem to go only part way to the ceiling but which actually have a foot or so of unframed glass hardly noticeable at the top. Your biggest crisis of adjustment will be in the bathroom which offers uncurtained floor-to-ceiling windows to the rabbit-inhabited hills, modified only by occasional panels of obscure glass. The "tub" is free form, sunken, Roman style, of terrazzo. The toilet hangs from the wall and the flush button is as deliberately hidden as the spheroids at an Easter Egg hunt. Adventure unlimited.

I don't know whether I have hammered enough to nail down the point that Lloyd Ruocco's house is an experience that makes you a square of your former self, raises you to a higher power. It imparts some psychic equivalent of the overdrive in your car. Your engine is not working so hard and your passage through time is for a while no effort.

Of course the place sounds thoroughly impractical to the tract-house-broken mind. The most obvious objection is that it would never do for children, if only on the grounds of the plentiful plate glass. Leaving aside any tendency to theorize that children should be drilled to live in glass houses, let's simply acknowledge that Ruocco's own house was not designed for children but for adults who value above all the life of the senses.

**N**OW WE CAN GO ON to consider how this wonderfully ingenious architect might be exploited in connection with the housing problems of average families. Assume in the first place that he will always try to introduce esthetic excitement into any house he designs. Commercial eagerness would rarely cause him to make silly compromises of design as concessions to imagined popular preference. This relative purity of Ruocco's sets him apart from most home builders, and indeed from most architects.

Assume too that Architect Ruocco is an implacable foe of the tract look in housing. In this quirk he is not too different from many people who have lived in tract houses. One important fact that has emerged from post-war tract living is that sooner or later the inmates make more or less pathetic efforts to break up the standardized living pattern imposed by the limited design sense of average sub-dividers.

But there is only so much that amateurs can do to take the curse off houses that were ill-conceived to begin with. They can landscape. They can build fences and patios, add a room maybe (if they are lucky on lot size). There is a tendency, however, for a tract-dweller's improvements to have the effect of homing him in, self-centering his life. The neighbor-

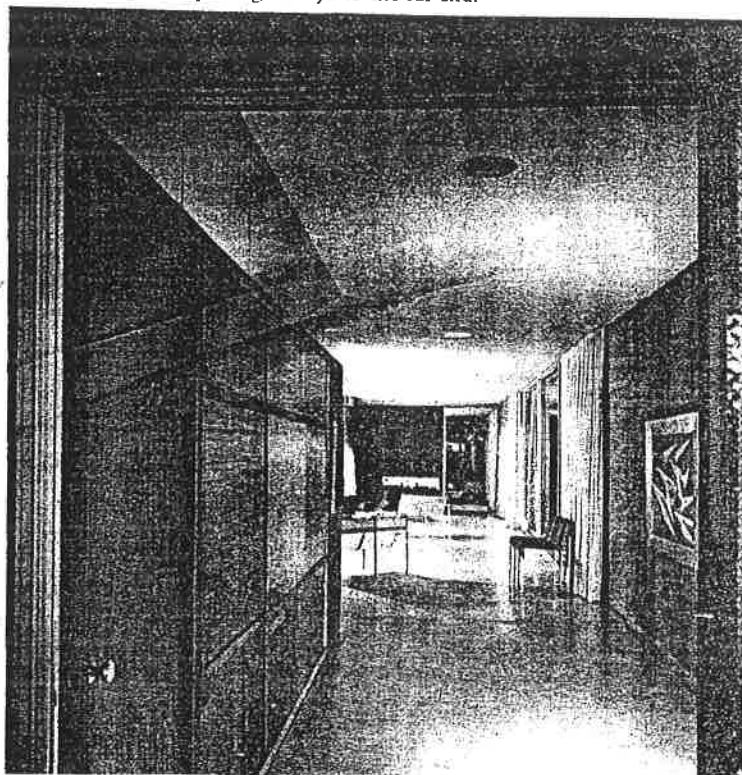
Ruocco, like a Jonas Salk of architecture, thinks he is on the trail of a cure for tractitis. He thinks that whole neighborhoods should be the product of architectural design of the most careful kind. Not for a minute does this mean that the design would be rigid, frozen, take-it-or-leave-it. He believes that the essential thing about a neighborhood is its ability to change and grow. The place where the most flexibility has to be possible is in the homes themselves. Each house site in a neighborhood should be ready on short notice to accommodate itself to the needs of any family—whether it be childless newlyweds or childfled elders, solitary hermit or Lionel van Deerlin (six children). The population make-up of a healthy neighborhood shall not be imposed by some mass builder's calculations, but shall result from the natural forces of human attraction and repulsion, aided by architectural forethought.

The logical follow-through of Architect Ruocco's concern about the neighborhood unit is—paradoxically enough—pre-fabrication and mass production of houses, not whole houses but parts of houses, standardized parts from which houses of great variety in size and shape and character can be assembled rapidly. Pre-fabrication of houses was a dream of architects even before Ford made the mass-production revolution, but no house-parts system has yet caught on in a big way, largely because the old wasteful methods of house-building are so profitable.

As Ruocco sees it, our technology is now so advanced that if some individual or institution of sufficient prestige were to push the project a vast new industry would be born to supply pre-fabricated house parts. These parts would include wall sections made mainly of materials that can best be handled industrially (glass, metals, plastics) but not neglecting the traditional graces of wood, leather, etc. Roof systems would be worked out so that ceiling and weatherproofing would

*continued on page 64*

Inside the front door, one is struck by the lengthening vista, with a fantastic garden pulling the eye to the far end.



DOUGLAS M. SIMMONDS

form a sandwich with strength in the middle to easily span adequate spaces. Kitchen and bath would come in adaptable pre-fabricated sections, and all utilities would be engineered in.

As we noted, pre-fabrication is hardly new, and there are a number of fairly advanced schemes in the air all the time. The distinctive Ruocco approach (worked out in conversations with Everett Herter of Coronado and other San Diego idea men) calls for a comprehensive laboratory of design to which manufacturers of materials and parts would supply their latest offerings, but in which the principal activity would be *architecturally controlled research*. Over the years design refinements would develop—not according to the cynical forces that control auto design, but according to the high creative standards of the uncompromising architect interpreting the needs of society, remembering always that one of the psychic needs of society is flexibility and variety in housing.

Ruocco's hope is that some entrepreneur on the scale of Henry Kaiser will see the wisdom of his approach and invest accordingly. It is my impression, though, that Ruocco's concept of a design revolution in housing will not catch on with the big spenders until its worth has been proved in an actual neighborhood in which the superior designs of the architect have given several years of satisfaction. Accordingly, I think it is the responsibility of San Diego institutions of higher learning to consult Architect Ruocco carefully as to the possibility of setting up a pioneer superior neighborhood in conjunction with one of the college campuses that are blossoming all over the region. I should think it would be an ideal investment for the University of California in connection with the proposed La Jolla campus, lest those environs develop no more handsomely than the tract-girdled

superior neighborhood and house design.

University of California sponsorship of the Ruocco concept actually might *attract* the real estate interests which are the main pressure bloc against creating a La Jolla campus. The real estate powers themselves could *profitably* join in a venture to build truly exceptional houses in their precious acres. And our aircraft manufacturers would do wisely to look into the fabrication of house-parts as a suitable *steady* employment for their work forces.

It is not possible to give you the specific profile of another man's brainchild until it is out of the womb, but certainly Ruocco's own house is a stunning example of his sure esthetic touch and a hint as to some of the new values he would introduce to a designed neighborhood. It is hardly a complete catalog of the delights he would supply to meet more various needs, including the needs of children.

Though he would probably disown the connection, there is already flourishing a great industry based on the hidden psychic hunger for flexible housing. Trailer parks are a crude example of the kind of neighborhood toward which Ruocco is pushing his thoughts. The best of trailer parks develop a pretty good community spirit and offer community facilities to make for common joy in living. The trailers themselves have advantages from a house-keeping point of view, but as design objects they closely reflect the sterile Detroit cynicism and take little advantage of the resources of the true architectural mind. But they are a foretaste of possibilities. Their main advantage is pick-up-and-go readiness. Their main disadvantage is uniformity and tightness of the living arrangements.

Lloyd Ruocco has not carried his contemplations so far as to eliminate the need for fixed house foundations, but, taking the cue of the trailer, I would suggest that it is important in carrying out his idea of fluid neighborhoods to elim-

house. The foundation must be easily movable too. Further than that, portable landscaping should be introduced where possible. These innovations in turn might encourage flexible lot lines, and thereby hangs the chance for truly park-like residential neighborhoods that will not be very different from the enchanting early villages of New England—but will be vastly superior to the sub-divided tract "paradises" that comprise most of the housing now getting built.

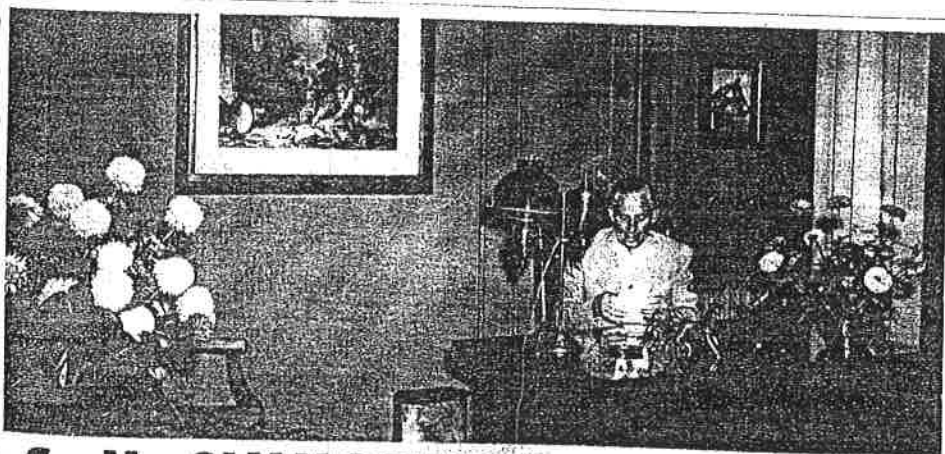
In a February telecast, master architect Walter Gropius made the point that architecture only exists when the observer is "elated" by seeing and experiencing a building. Lloyd Ruocco is one of the few in our region who can deliver that quality. Let's make wider use of his talent.

## SYMPHONY:

### Van Beinum's finest hours

**E**DUARD VAN BEINUM developed that most insufferable of handicaps for symphony conductors, a serious heart ailment. So he had to take leave of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, possibly forever, though it is the full-hearted hope of Southern California that he can come back. Superlatives are not ridiculous in regard to his accomplishment, not even public relations director John O. Northcutt's claim that the Los Angeles Philharmonic was raised to first place among the world's orchestras while under van Beinum, bearer of the Old World's deepest artistic wisdom.

Accordingly, one of the momentous evenings in music history was van Beinum's farewell at Shrine Auditorium (6,400 seats sold out) in Los Angeles. January 31, playing the eighth and ninth symphonies of a newly re-discovered master, Ludwig van Beethoven. Van to van, the throng was so moved that it stood up at three points during the evening to honor the departing master—and the departed one. This was Beethoven free from musical inflation, the ranting and bombast that often develop in performance. The pulse was true, the beat beatific, the surges of power clear bolts from Olympus. Due to typical van Beinum sorcery, a listener found unexpected depths in the famously witty Eighth, unexpected humor in the serious Ninth. This is not to say that the Ninth's final "Ode to Joy" was merely humorous.



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30 May 1974

Mr. Lloyd Ruocco, FAIA  
3601 Fifth Avenue  
San Diego, California 92103

Dear Lloyd

Enclosed is an article that a friend sent me from  
Los Angeles that I thought you might like to have.

Al tells me that the Fellowship ceremonies were  
great. I'm sorry that I wasn't able to be there  
to join the San Diego contingent to watch you re-  
ceive this much deserved honor.

Again, congratulations.

Sincerely

Homer Delawie, FAIA

HD/c  
Enc.

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

SAN DIEGO ARCHITECT ELECTED  
TO AIA COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

Lloyd Ruocco, a pioneer in the development of postwar contemporary architecture in the San Diego area, has been elected to the College of Fellows of The American Institute of Architects.

Fellowship in the Institute is a lifetime honor bestowed for outstanding contribution to the profession. Investiture of the newly elected Fellows will take place on May 20 at the AIA's annual convention in Washington, D.C. (All Fellows of the Institute are entitled to use the initials FAIA after their names.)

Ruocco's early residential designs of glass, steel, and wood were regarded by his professional colleagues as structural expressions reflecting the Southern California environment.

The Design Center he developed here has long attracted as tenants architects, graphic designers, photographers, and landscape architects. Many of San Diego's leading architects spent their formative years in Ruocco's firm.

Ruocco helped found the Allied Artists' Council of San Diego, the Contemporary Arts Committee of the Fine Arts Gallery, and the Allied Craftsmen. In 1961, he founded Citizens Coordinate, which presesses for higher standards on environmental issues.

An advocate of esthetics in urban growth, he made a presentation before the AIA National Committee on Urban Design in Washington, DC, in 1968, entitled, "Supercity: A Prototype for the U.S.A."

####

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photograph attached.

### Herman O. Ruhnau, FAIA

A past president of Inland California Chapter, AIA, Herman Ruhnau was also instrumental in the establishment of that chapter. He has served on many AIA committees, and was chairman of the Southern California Chapter, AIA, Ethics and Practices committee.

### Lloyd Ruocco, FAIA

A member of the San Diego Chapter, AIA, Lloyd Ruocco pioneered in the development, after World War II, of residential designs of glass, wood, and steel. He helped found the Allied Artists' Council of San Diego, the Contemporary Arts Committee of the Fine Arts Gallery, and the Allied Craftsmen.

### Morris Verger, FAIA

A former member of the CCAIA Board of Directors, as well as many Southern California Chapter, AIA, and Council committees, Morris Verger is involved in the professional development of architects, in addition to having his own practice and serving as an architectural consultant.

### John Woodbridge, FAIA

A member of the Northern California Chapter, AIA, John Woodbridge was in charge of the redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. He also designed the National Sculpture Garden, the proposed National Square, and a master plan for the Mall that links the Capitol and Washington Monument.



Becket



Bissell



Botsai



Costa



Friedman



Gehry



Marr



Richardson



Ruhnau



Ruocco



Verger



Woodbridge

## AFFAIRS OF STATE

### Architect Elected Councilman

Don R. Griffin (Orange County), of Griffin & Banks, AIA, in Buena Park, has been elected Councilman for that city. He previously served as an elected official for eight years as Trustee for the Buena Park Library District.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Coastal Zone Plan

The State of California's Coastal Zone Conservation Commission has selected William H. Liskamm, AIA (NC), AIP, San Francisco architect and urban planning consultant, to prepare the Appearance and Design Element of the California Coastal Zone Plan. This plan is in direct response to the Coastal Initiative passed by the voters of California.





## THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

March 5, 1974

Mr. Lloyd A. Ruocco, FAIA  
3631 - 5th Avenue  
San Diego, California 92103

Dear Mr. Ruocco:

I have the pleasure of informing you that the Jury of Fellows advanced you to Fellowship in the Institute effective February 21, 1974, for your notable contribution to the advancement of the profession of architecture. With this action, you are also admitted to the College of Fellows.

Those who have been advanced to Fellowship will receive their medals, with appropriate ceremony, at the Investiture of Fellows to be held on May 20, 1974, at 5:00 p.m. at Constitution Hall, Washington, D. C.

The Officers of the Institute and the Jury of Fellows join with me in the hope that you will be present to receive this honor. Please send your reply to me at your early convenience.

Permit me to add my personal congratulations and good wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Hilliard T. Smith, Jr., FAIA

cc: Mr. Homer Delawie, FAIA, Sponsor

Enclosures

# Salute to

THE PORT OF SAN DIEGO

CHULA VISTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
CORONADO REALTY BOARD

for their significant action in placing before the community a graphic picture of proposed development that, if attained, will bring untold benefit to our entire area. It's a story that warrants the support of every San Diego resident.

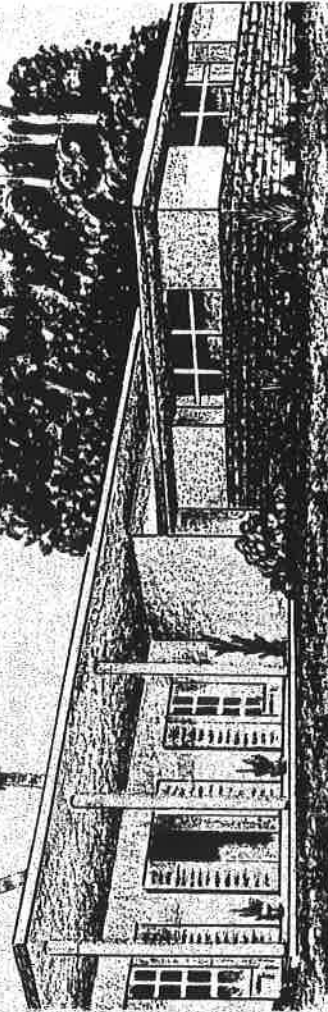
THE JAY CEES OF SAN DIEGO for the many civic ventures they are sponsoring with singular success.

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF SAN DIEGO, INC., for offering teen-agers an opportunity to learn, through experience, the basic functions of many types of business enterprises.

THE SAN DIEGO VOCATIONAL SCHOOL for its outstanding service through the apprentice training program.

The San Diego Home Show is proud of being instrumental in presenting this representative group of civic exhibits in order that you may know "Your San Diego" better. Be informed. Visit these displays and learn the facts.

# Program



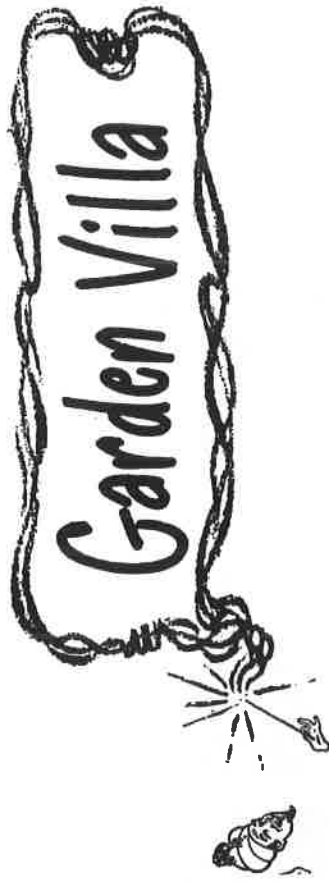
## SAN DIEGO HOME SHOW

AND

## FOOD SHOW JUBILEE

MAY 16 thru 24 ELECTRIC BUILDING

BARBON PARK



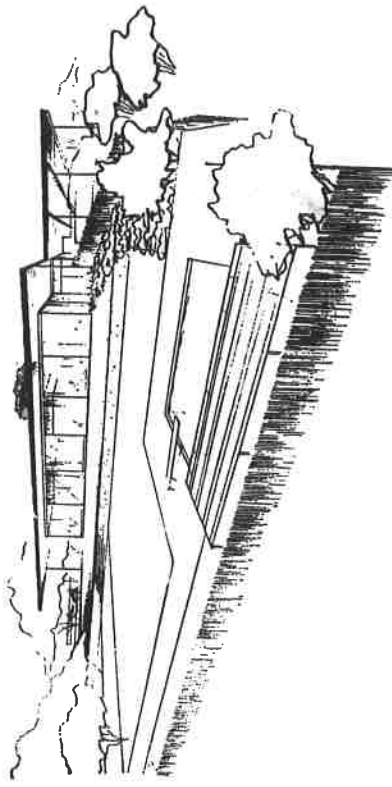
**F**OR YEARS now a good many of us have been standing on tip toe, looking for sundry brave new things which we keep hearing about but never seem to see. Such glowing terms as modular, flexible, expandable, open plan space houses, have been abundant but nothing concrete has been done about it in San Diego.

Suddenly, the natural moment for a demonstration of these ideas presented itself: Jim Wilson needed a really new type of model house for his San Diego Home Show; Architect Ruocco became interested as soon as he saw the wonderful site which the Park and Recreation Commissions made available; an enthusiastic collaboration was immediately forthcoming from a host of suppliers, and thus Garden Villa was underway.

Changeability of the plan is accomplished thru the eight foot module and the interchangeability of the panels, windows, etc. Openness, transparency, continuity of colors and textures and the use of fine materials are all stressed. Mechanical innovations such as radiant heat, sliding exterior glass wall panels, the use of storage wall units, remote control electrical system, acoustic plastic ceilings, down draft heating for the bathroom, built-in range and many other features exemplify today's form of luxury.

Landscaping and the interior furnishings have been carefully keyed to the new aesthetic of clarified space and simplified form. Muted color, simple forms in the furniture, interesting, quiet fabrics, selected works of art and mellow lighting all add the final and rarely seen qualities of serenity and joyfulness in a small home.

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy Garden Villa and we hope to hear your reactions.



## GARDEN VILLA

|                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Architect                         | L. P. A. Ruocco, A. I. A. |
| Landscape Architect               | Harriet Wimmer            |
| Prefabrication and Construction   | Garden Villas             |
| Landscape Construction and Plants | Leucadia Nursery          |
| Interior Design                   | Design Center             |
| Photography                       | Ed Sievers                |

## COLLABORATORS

### W. P. Fuller & Co.

|                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Paint, Glass and Mirrors              | Van Ness Louvre Windows          |
| Malibu Sliding Steel Door             | Jensen Medicine Cabinets         |
| Windsor Tub Enclosure                 | Alsynite Fibreglas Panels        |
| Hardwood, Plywood                     |                                  |
| Novoply Sliding Doors                 |                                  |
| Plankweld and Formica                 | U. S. Plywood Corporation        |
| Exterior Walls                        | Masonite Corp.                   |
| Tempered Presdwood                    | M. Herrmann Co., Distributor     |
| Lumber                                | Western Lumber Co.               |
| Hardwood & Hardwood Doors             | Sullivan Lumber Co.              |
| Concrete                              | Nelsco Corp.—Transit Mix         |
| Concrete Contractors                  | Tessitore & Buldis               |
| Steel—Square Tubing and Rolled Shapes | Drake Steel Supply Co.           |
| Steel Fabrication                     | Southwest Iron & Steel Corp.     |
| Roof—Pabco Double Gravel              |                                  |
| Built Up Industrial Roof              | El Cajon Roofing Co.             |
| Insulation—Balsam Wool                | Baker Hardwood Lumber Co., Dist. |
| Flooring—Kitchen & Laundry            |                                  |
| Maticco Artistaflex                   |                                  |
| "Vynil Asbestos"                      |                                  |
| Bathroom—Armstrong Cork               | Astra Flooring Co.               |

# The rich rewards of knowing what you want

Imagination, not money, made this a richly rewarding home. It cost \$7.50 per sq. ft. in times when \$10 a sq. ft. was big news

*The dwelling-house is the last romantic place of refuge, the last portion of the environment wherein a man can express himself, and fulfill his personality, and live after the manner of his dreams.*

—Lewis Mumford

by Lloyd Ruocco

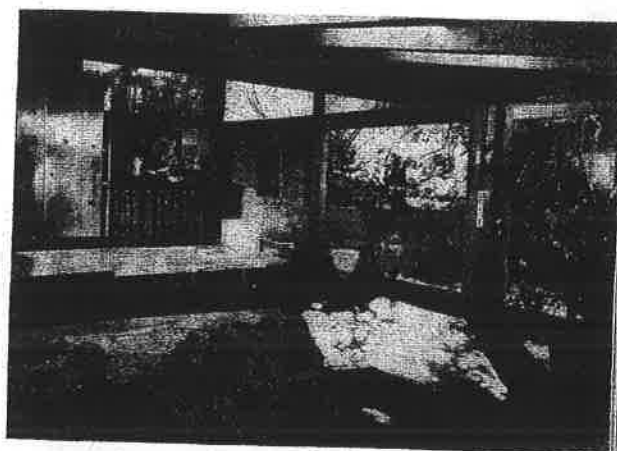
Four years ago I built what is called a modern house. I built it myself without adherence to any plans, blueprints, or specifications, and I built it in large part out of sand and rock and lumber and water that sprang from the site upon which it was built.

What I tried to put into my house was spirit and art and beauty and a sense of being close to nature.

In 1946 when I told my friends that I had in mind an unconventional house which would literally grow out of the ground, they warned me that to build any house away from the accredited norm—that emphasized imagination,

art, and daring—would cost me a fortune. But "Il Cavo"—the name of our two-bath, two-bedroom house—cost \$7.50 per sq. ft., and contains 1505 square feet of floor in the main structure. We have proved conclusively, to ourselves at least, that beauty, spirit, feeling, and imagination are not expensive if you've got the courage to exercise them with ingenuity. And our house lets us be completely ourselves, in a way that a conventional house would not permit.

In building we used the natural resources on the land. All exterior retaining walls are dirt from the diggings, stabilized with cement. The rock for the (Continued on next page)



This is our front entrance and laundry. Yes, laundry!

How our living room looks from the entrance level. Seen from above, it always invites you to descend to enjoy the view. Right, our hearth and smoke stack in the center of the room are removed completely in summer, and are replaced by a coffee table with a tree root base. Stack is counterbalanced to slide easily up or down, closes down against fire rim to stop sparks at night. Shown in detail on page 164.



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAYNARD PARKER

## The rewards of knowing what you want (continued)

living-room wall also came out of the digging. It was of random size and color without flat or decent edges and was laid up with top soil and cement mortar worked between the stones with bare hands. The whole effect is marvelously mellow and natural looking; in fact, much more so than good stone could ever be. (See the color photograph of this on page 117.)

What we didn't have we purchased as reasonably as possible, for we had to make our money go far. For instance, an old, sturdy \$15 telephone pole, sawed in half, supports my living-room steps. Lumber and drawers which came from a war surplus sale make up our cabinets and storage space. Tree branches are used as towel racks in the bathrooms. A vertical slice of a big tree trunk made our dining table.

Our economies were achieved mainly because we let the structure itself be seen—and so eliminated the expense of a covering finish. This can be done by anybody—providing the structural materials are Nature's materials and are used with sympathetic handling.

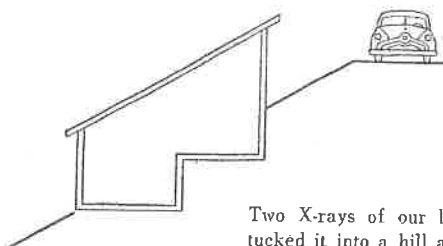
I was never in the market for refined, mechanically perfect, sleekly finished materials. I didn't want people coming into the house and pointing to certain features and saying, "Oh, isn't that the latest thing?"

I wanted my house to have a sort of rough, ageless beauty about it. And it has. To me, dramatic enrichment of atmosphere is infinitely more important than refinement of detail or precision of finish.

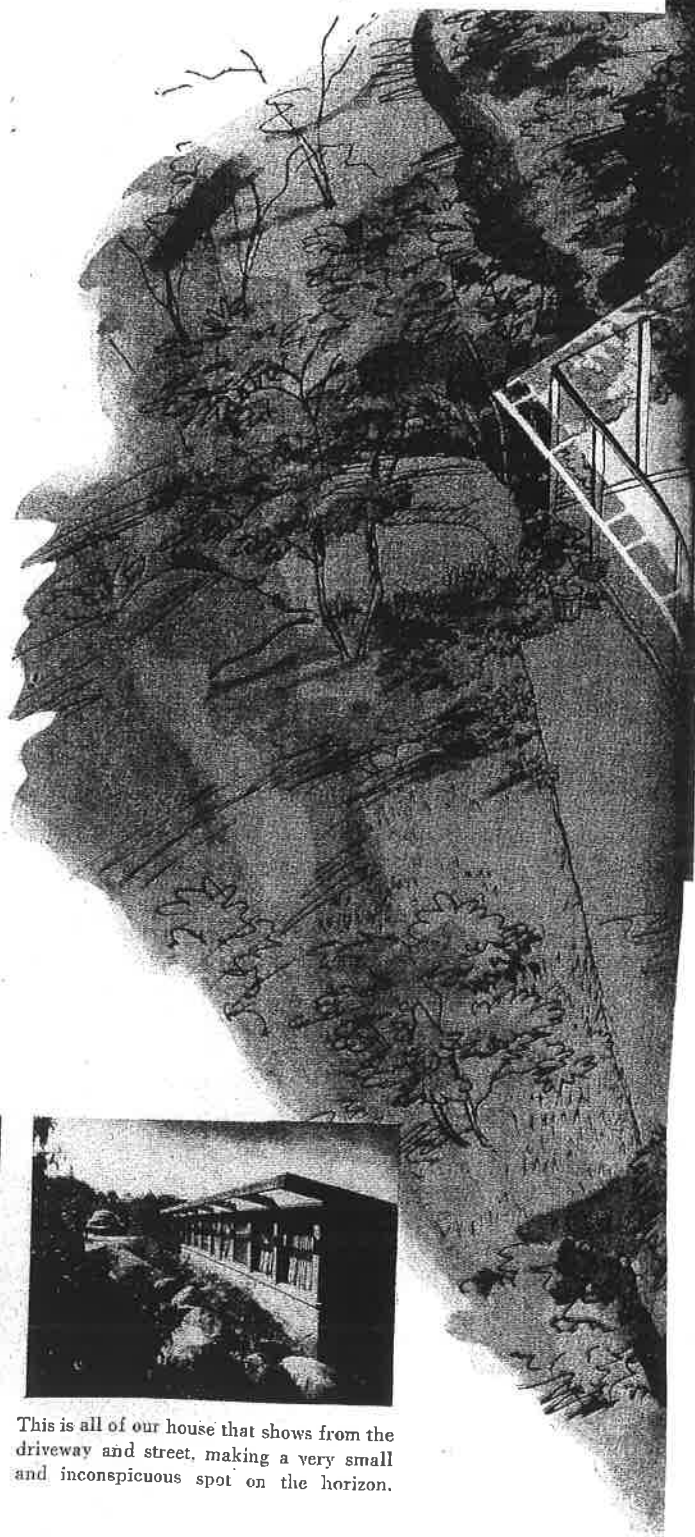
Most homeowners don't feel that way. Or if they do, they're too timid, too fearful, too afraid of experimenting with their own pet ideas, their own personal philosophies of living.

They live by the artistic standards of others, never creating any beauty for themselves, only copying what others have found rewarding. This is a great and crying pity, for all art, all spirit, all beauty is singularly individual and you yourself must inject it into your house, or your home becomes the creation of alien hands.

"Il Cavo" is the kind of house (Continued on page 115)



Two X-rays of our house show how we tucked it into a hill and among trees and shrubs. Result looks as though it grew there, a most satisfactory thing visually.



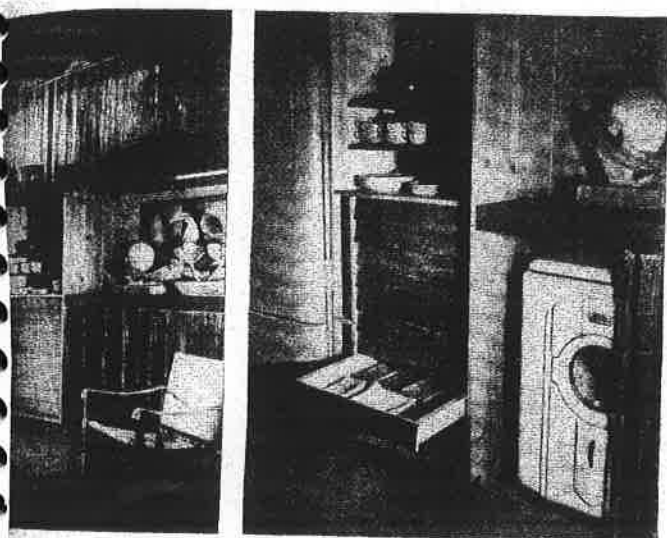
Terrace side of our living room overlooks our continuing hill. No exterior wall seems high, even though ceilings inside are high.

You walk through this court to arrive at front door. It is also our eating terrace, since it is near the kitchen, and private.

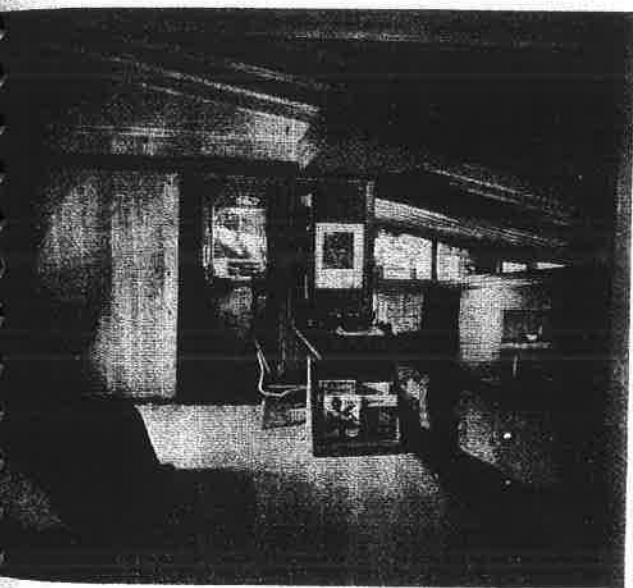
This is all of our house that shows from the driveway and street, making a very small and inconspicuous spot on the horizon.

## The rewards of knowing what you want

(continued)



Above are two pictures of our laundry. Yes, it is in the front hall. Front-opening Bendix tucks away admirably under a shelf. We enclose the space with a curtain of matchstick bamboo, hung vertically. On shelf above we do arrangements of flowers and other nature forms. Drawers at left were war surplus map drawers from bombers.



We sleep on a balcony bedroom, overlooking the living room. A curtain pulls across the side of the room that is open, if we want to nap in the daytime or dress while company is present. Notice how, everywhere, there are long vistas through the house. Judged in plan, this room is actually small. But visually it is huge, for the eye is not stopped by any obstruction for at least 40 feet.

that could belong only to me and my wife. It is the basic reflection of our tastes, our problems, our personalities.

Most homes are not their owners'. They are standardized according to the hoary-haired dictates of banks and lending institutions, and they reflect as much life and individuality as a dead mackerel.

Fortunately for us, we didn't have to traffic with banks, appraisers, and money men. We paid cash for everything as we went along. We took our own financial risk because we knew that no tradition-ridden bank would ever consider as saleable the house we had in mind. We built as we liked, bounded only by the limitations of our money supply which, frankly, was very small.

Before I tell you about our house in detail, let me introduce ourselves so that you can better understand the personal, functional, and aesthetic factors which produced our home.

My wife Ilse is a ceramist and a college instructor. She is of German parents who created in her a real love for order and simplicity. Her mother, a poetic soul, raised three children in the garden, firmly believing that one beautiful flower was worth much more than a dozen pieces of expensive bric-a-brac.

I am an architect, and I too have a certain need of being close to nature. I was raised in rural Canada, in thinly populated areas. My father was Italian and my mother English. This produced in me a certain lack of belonging—socially or nationally. Perhaps because of it, I feel no particular attachment to the customs of the past, or devotion to the designs of the moment.

In other words, both Ilse and I are free souls and artists—free to do what we feel is beautiful.

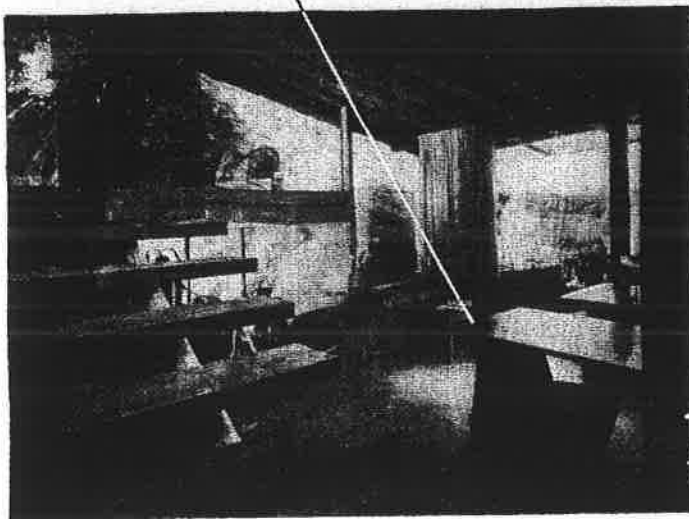
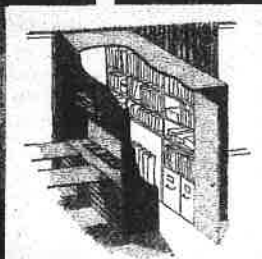
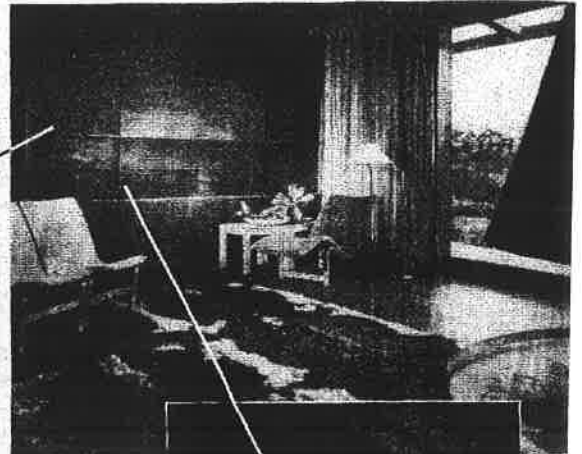
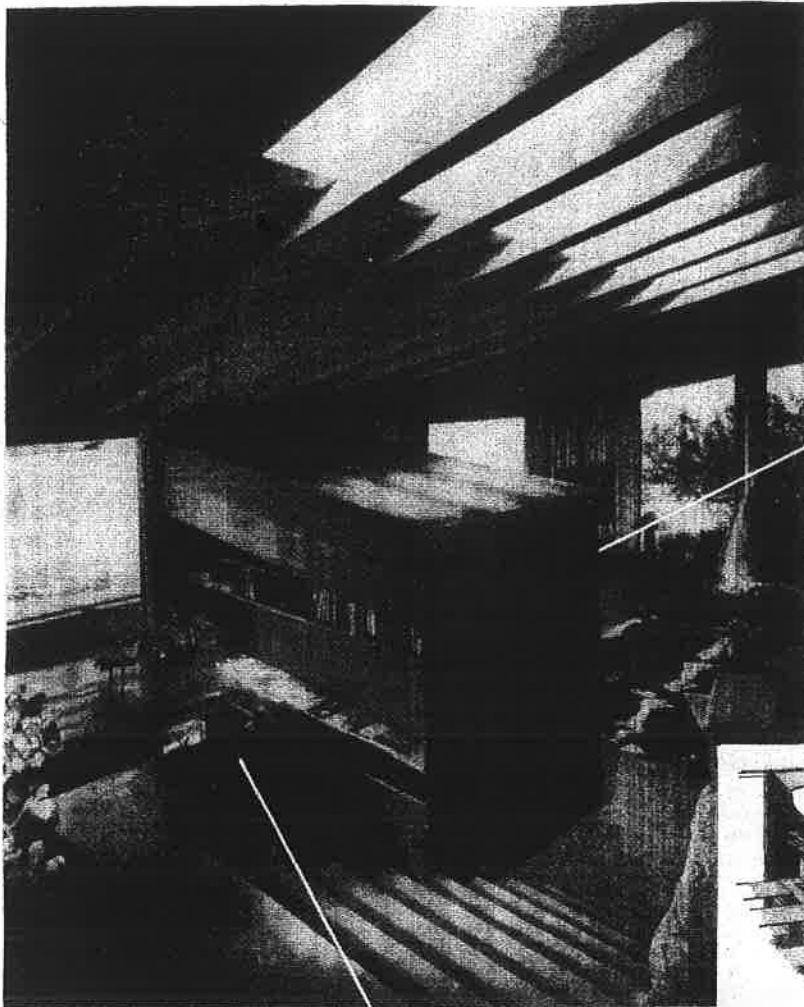
I built the house with the sole assistance of a carpenter who, I suspect, went around telling people that I had rocks in my head. I built the house to conform to the contours and boulders and plant life of the land. The limits and the angles of the walls and the relative levels of the terraces were all determined by the digging, the grade of the hill and the native shrubs.

I improvised as I went along. The building expanded five feet in one direction and eight feet in another. The curved stone wall was a choice over that of drilling and blasting out solid granite. None of the exterior walls are parallel or even at right angles. Some of them change direction to avoid rocks, others to save shrubbery. Thus, the entire house has a sense of handicraft—of springing out of the ground. It gives you the feeling of plastic, amorphous form—of age, reliability, and an inevitable conformity to nature. And because of this, it is simple and secure.

(Continued on the next page)

## The rewards of knowing what you want

(continued)



### How to put every cubic inch to work

When your funds are limited you have to squeeze every dollar. Cagney shopping is only part of it. Thorough designing, so every bit of enclosed space is used, is even more important. The storage partition in our lower room is 100% useful. It divides the living area from my work area. But it is also our record player, storage room (sketch shows inner closet), library. It has 420 cu. ft. of storage space, 40 lineal ft. of shelves.

Take the structure, for example. A single-plane shear roof follows the natural slope of the site. It is supported on wood posts, with plate glass in between for all exterior walls.

Lateral stability against seismic action is achieved by bracing each wall plane separately and then unifying the whole thing through the diagonal sheathed roof. And it works very well, too. A little while ago, we had a fairly sized earthquake near San Diego; and the house weathered the temblor without a quiver.

Functionally, the main idea of "Il Cavo" was to achieve the greatest sense of spaciousness possible on a limited budget. By using the space-house idea in the main building, we have long diagonal vistas of over fifty feet. This is surprising when you consider that our dimensions are only 43' x 35', giving a total area of 1505 square feet. Since an additional area of 700 square feet would cover both the carport and guest room, this totals 2205 square feet for a two-bedroom, two-bath house, which isn't bad in the small house field.

From time to time, people come up to us and say, "Your house looks fine and different, (Continued on page 164)"