LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

6:30 PM - Thursday, August 07, 2025

Los Altos Library - Orchard Room

PARTICIPATION: Members of the public may participate by being present at the Los Altos Main Library Orchard Room located at 13 S San Antonio Road Los Altos, CA 94022 during the meeting. Public comment is accepted in person at the physical meeting location, or via email to **LCpubliccomment@losaltosca.gov**.

REMOTE MEETING OBSERVATION: Members of the public may view the meeting via the link below but will not be permitted to provide public comment via Zoom. Public comment will be taken in-person, and members of the public may provide written public comment by following the instructions below.

Telephone: 1-669-444-9171 | Zoom Webinar ID: 999 8761 3325 | Passcode: 790657

https://losaltosca-gov.zoom.us/j/99987613325?pwd=cULDwcENlvFiJkMaNaVm6Z8inINVHM.1

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS: Verbal comments can be made in-person at the public hearing or submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Written comments can be mailed or delivered in person to the City Clerk's Office or emailed to **LCpubliccomment@losaltosca.gov**.

Correspondence must be received by 2 PM on the day of the meeting to ensure distribution prior to the meeting. Comments provided after 2 PM will be distributed the following day and included with public comment in the packet.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Members of the audience may bring to the Commission's attention any item that is not on the agenda. Please complete a "Request to Speak" form and submit it to the Staff Liaison. Speakers are generally given two or three minutes, at the discretion of the Chair. Please be advised that, by law, the Commission is unable to discuss or take action on issues presented during the Public Comment Period. According to State Law (also known as "the Brown Act") items must first be noticed on the agenda before any discussion or action.

Written Public Comments

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approve minutes of the regular meeting of May 1, 2025

2. Approve minutes of the special meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

3. Review and Recommend Approval to Move Forward with Main Library Improvement Design Concept

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

STAFF REPORTS

4. Receive report from Santa Clara County Library District

5. Receive report from Main Library Staff

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

SPECIAL NOTICES TO PUBLIC

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Agendas, Staff Reports and some associated documents for Library Commission items may be viewed on the Internet at*https://www.losaltosca.gov/librarycommission*.

If you wish to provide written materials, please provide the Commission Staff Liaison with **10 copies** of any document that you would like to submit to the Commissioners in order for it to become part of the public record. For other questions regarding the meeting proceedings, please contact the City Clerk at (650) 947-2720.

From: Jp Mcnulty
To: Public Comment - LC
Subject: Library bathrooms
Date: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 6:56:20 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing to express my strong support for a single use, non gendered bathroom plus separate Men's and Women's bathrooms rather than "non gendered" bathrooms. I can't see the rationale for substituting non-gendered bathrooms for single gender? There are many people that feel uncomfortable (particularly women) sharing bathrooms with the opposite sex but who could object to single sex bathrooms when you also have a non-gendered option?

It's important for many women to have private space in a bathroom. Transsexual individuals are a tiny minority of the population so changing norms that remove privacy for the majority to accommodate a few doesn't make sense. Let's not support this erasure of women's rights.

Sincerely,
JP

From:	Maria Bautista
To:	Public Comment - LC
Subject:	Library Commission Meeting August 7, 2025: Item #3 Library Improvement
Date:	Wednesday, August 6, 2025 11:22:50 PM
Attachments:	IMG_6125.heic IMG_6127.heic IMG_6123.heic IMG_6121.heic IMG_6118.heic

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Hello Library Commissioners,

Thank you for your efforts in leading the improvements of the Los Altos Main Library. It's an exciting time for the community.

Please consider a few observations:

•More visitor space is a stated goal, yet FOL and staff areas takes up 1/4 of the library: In staff area, are 27 dedicated desks, a staff lounge as well as two dedicated restrooms necessary?

•Consider locating FOL in a downtown storefront as a "used" bookstore with enough space for sorting and storage. The City and the LAMVCF can help support efforts to locate FOL in a space that not only better serves FOL and the library, but also adds vibrancy to downtown.

•The FOL space in the proposed plan should instead be used for additional individual study rooms, and perhaps additional room for shelves

•The Children's Room has been the focus of public discussions including with an outdoor patio space. If the Children's Room is not being addressed in this remodel, we have failed.

•The Chou family funds would be better spent sponsoring the Children's Room instead of a misplaced patio in the Heritage Orchard.

•The proposed design has glass walls on all conference rooms and individual enclosed study rooms. Conference rooms in a public venue should afford greater privacy. Many students use individual study rooms for online tests; online test-taking does not permit students to sit in spaces with full glass walls.

•The glass partition that divides the library interior reads like airport security architecture, and will be a maintenance nightmare.

•At a few workshops, I heard many concerns about after hours access. The presentation does not include data on a community priority for after-hours access. Are there plans to better determine whether this is a desired feature or just a current trend? What costs are associated with securing an after-hours space, and at whose expense?

In moving toward the actual design details, please consider the following:

•The Los Altos Main Library and Civic Center were designed by renown architect Ernest J Kump who had a very clear Midcentury Bay Tradition vernacular. I have sent by separate email an essay by Lance Bernard about Kump and the era-defining work of his contemporaries and attached a few photos here from the Ernest J Kump archives at UC Berkeley Environmental Design.

•The Library Courtyard project proposed earlier this year missed the opportunity for a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) of the Library: the building qualifies for consideration to the National Registry of Historic Places; the City-contracted historians were aware of its status. Consider initiating a preliminary HRE in order to better understand what you are working with.

•The fit and finish represented in the "concept' is sadly generic. I have just visited the LAYC renovation and am disappointed that no effort was made to honor the building, its era-defining vernacular and its intentional connection to the outdoors, specifically the Heritage Orchard. LAYC's nine foot tall fences are devastating to the architecture and integrity of place.

•Attached are photos of the Mill Valley Library where the interior design not only complements its surrounding Redwood grove, but provides a space whose character is inviting and consistent with its exterior architecture. The fit and finish are of high quality and unique character. Please apply similar principles to final design decisions.

Los Altos gets only a few opportunities to improve our buildings. Please be sure the team takes the time and does the research to make this a phenomenal project.

Best regards,

Maria Bautista

Please acknowledge receipt of this Public Comment.

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From: Maria Bautista
To: Public Comment - LC
Subject: Library Commission Meeting August 7, 2025: Item #3 Library Improvement
Date: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 11:27:23 PM
Attachments: Lance Bernard, KumpBay Tradition.pdf

Hello Library Commissioners,

Per my previous public comment dated today, attached please find an essay by Lance Bernard about architect Ernest J Kump and Bay Tradition architecture for your consideration of library design.

Best,

Maria Bautista

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

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University of Nevada, Reno

Nature Building Nature: Architecture and Regional Identity in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1870-1970

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

Lance V. Bernard

Dr. C. Elizabeth Raymond/Dissertation Advisor

December, 2002

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UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA RENO

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

We recommend that the dissertation
prepared under our supervision by

LANCE V. BERNARD

entitled

Nature Building Nature: Architecture and Regional Identity in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1870-1970

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Stacy Burton, Ph.D., Committee Member

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December, 2002

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ABSTRACT

The San Francisco Bay Area's locally-created architectural idiom, the Bay Tradition, was a unique phenomenon among American urban landscapes because it manifested regionalist ideas that, in other regions, appeared in other aesthetic forms, like literature or the visual arts. It emerged in the late 1870s among local elites but was not created as a coherent movement. Instead, it was a shared set of assumptions about architecture and its relationship to the physical environment, based on the premise that Bay Area architecture should express the physical environment and subordinate architecture to nature. It grew from a variety of factors, including the Bay Area's rapid urban growth, cosmopolitan and relatively tolerant culture, attractive scenery and mild climate, and a clear sense that the area was unique.

Before 1930, Bay Tradition architects such as Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck used historicist design elements in an eclectic manner. Afterward, William Wurster, Ernest Kump, and builder Joseph Eichler emerged as the idiom's chief figures and fused the Bay Tradition's woodsy sensibilities with the International Style, creating simple forms but continuing their predecessors' sense of attachment to the natural surroundings. Also, the Bay Tradition was primarily a domestic style until the advent of World War II. Afterward, it manifested in schools, housing projects, and commercial structures as well, becoming more visible and drawing attention from architecture critics nationally.

The Bay Tradition faded by 1970 as architects lost interest in it and Bay Area residents mobilized against urban sprawl. Nonetheless, Bay Tradition landscapes survive in neighborhoods like northeastern Berkeley and suburban areas of Marin, Contra Costa, and San Mateo Counties.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation culminates years of studying architecture, regionalism, and urban landscapes. Many people have helped me along the way, and I deeply value and appreciate their contributions. The thanks begin with my committee - Professors C. Elizabeth Raymond, Richard Davies, Dennis Dworkin, Stacy Burton, and Peter Goin - for their insights and suggestions for improvement. In particular, Professor Raymond has played the most crucial role in turning a nebulous idea into something concrete and relevant. Also, Professor Scott Casper deserves thanks for helping improve and refine my abilities as an instructor.

Thanks also go the staff at the University of California, Berkeley's Bancroft and Environmental Design libraries, the California State Library in Sacramento, and the Interlibrary Loan desk at the University of Nevada, Reno for their help. In addition, without the assistantships and scholarships provided by the History department at the University of Nevada, Reno, my doctoral studies would not have happened.

My family and friends' support and encouragement have also helped greatly over the years. I am grateful to my parents, Steven and Carolyn Bernard, for all their generosity, and for encouraging me to read at an early age and pursue my academic goals. Also, I thank my brother Steve for his constant friendship, and my sister-in-law Kim and nephew Aidan for giving him much well-deserved happiness. I am also grateful to Jeff Ayres, Patty and Adam Crossland, Paul Edson, Graham Mortyn, Jeff Perlow, and Kate and Dan Selway for their long and solid friendships.

Finally, I am most grateful to my wife, Heidi, for all of her love, companionship, generosity, patience, humor, encouragement, and steady faith in me. More than anyone else, she makes it all worthwhile.

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INTRODUCTION

In a 1947 *New Yorker* article, critic Lewis Mumford cast a disapproving eye on postwar America's built environment and especially lamented the sterility of the new buildings in New York City. Seeing the architectural landscape as an impersonal mass, Mumford saw uniqueness and value only in the modern architecture[1] from the San Francisco Bay Area[2] (Figure I-1), where the architecture seemed fresh and human, unlike the New York skyline.[3] Unknown to Mumford, though, he had just noticed something that had existed for decades and expressed more than simply appealing design.

The Bay Area's distinctive architectural idiom, known by critics and scholars as the "Bay Tradition"[4] since 1949,[5] was not simply a local building style but a long-lived expression of regionalism[6] that reflected area elites' notions of what the Bay Area meant. Between its origin in 1876 and the mid-1960s, when it began losing favor among architects and clients alike, the Bay Tradition manifested what its proponents considered the best aspects of the Bay Area's urban landscape - its mild climate, attractive scenery, abundant native woods, relatively eclectic cultural sensibilities, and esteem for a free, relaxed, yet prosperous lifestyle. While the resulting urban forms bore some resemblance to other contemporary American suburbs, the Bay Tradition's urban landscapes were a form of regionalism in ways that other suburbs were not.

The Bay Tradition was not itself a wholly radical phenomenon in American urban history, because its landscapes were similar to those in affluent suburbs elsewhere in the United States. However, the Bay Tradition's landscapes were a regionalist expression, much like painting

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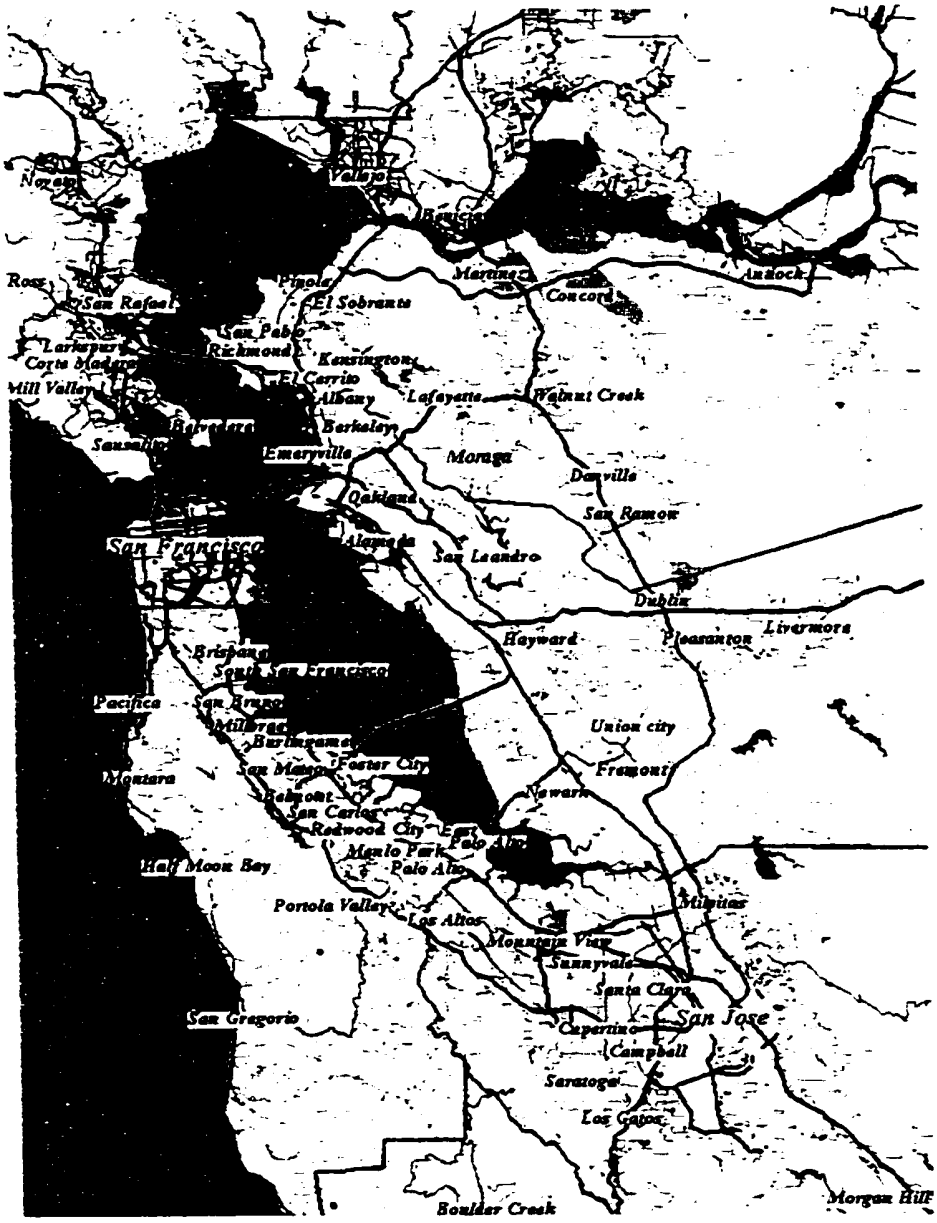

Figure I-1. Map of the San Francisco Bay Area. From website http://www.webstart.com.

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and literature elsewhere in the United States, conveying not only aesthetic sensibilities but also a regionalism based on lifestyle. This centered on residents' deep affinity for, and close relation with, the natural surroundings. To suit this, Bay Tradition architects created buildings and landscapes that blurred lines between indoors and outdoors, as well as between urban and rural, to better allow casual contact with the physical environment.

As a distinct phenomenon, the Bay Tradition's development is most clearly seen in retrospect, because it did not begin as a coherent movement, despite its architects' shared ideas about materials and landscape. Even in the late 1940s, its practitioners denied that it was a movement or a style, seeing themselves as architects with a similar bent for creating buildings that expressed Bay Area landscapes rather than obscuring them.[1] However, this picture overlooks several factors that unified the Bay Tradition over the course of a century and made it much more coherent and cohesive than its chief figures admitted. One was the region's landscape, which gave Bay Tradition architects both a motif to express and a suitable material to use. The Bay Area is characterized by its numerous hills, which in San Francisco are as high as 900 feet above sea level, while the Oakland and Berkeley hills (where the Bay Tradition began) rise over 2,000 feet. These overlook the bay and give the area its singular views, which Bay Tradition architects tried to incorporate and evoke in organic-looking buildings that seemed to grow out of the hillsides but did not overwhelm the existing scenery.

Also, the Bay Tradition depended heavily on redwood, native of the region and plentiful in the area before 1900. Architects' and builders' early reliance on it was forced not only by its abundance but also by the lack of other materials, as will be discussed further in chapter two. In addition, wooden structures were less dangerous to inhabit than unreinforced brick buildings during California's earthquakes, and

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redwood burns slowly and stubbornly, a clear advantage in an area whose cities were frequently razed by fire as late as 1906. Later, Bay Tradition architects preferred it for aesthetic reasons, considering redwood most appropriate for an organic architecture in which proximity to nature (defined throughout this work as the physical surroundings, including both climate and landscape) took precedence to conventional style.

Another vital factor is its practitioners' connection to the University of California, Berkeley, from which one can trace a clear lineage of educational and professional connections. Bernard Maybeck was one of the university's pioneering architecture professors, helping shape a department that trained Julia Morgan, William Wurster, and Ernest Kump, and later employed both Wurster and Charles Moore. Most of these figures shared personal connections both to each other and to the region in general, and their writings reveal a clear sense that architecture should reflect the Bay Area's cosmopolitan culture, benevolent climate, and inviting terrain.

For these reasons, a number of Bay Area architects, beginning in 1876 with amateur architect and minister Joseph Worcester, deemed their region unique for its beauty and claimed an affinity with its hilly, scenic landscape and mild, temperate climate.[9] From then into the 1950s, architects under the Bay Tradition rubric aimed to preserve and express this affinity in individual buildings and affluent neighborhoods. These all maintained a well-wooded, informal (even vaguely primitive) appearance and openness to nature, which were intended to better express the healthy, earthy yet refined sensibilities of the people who lived there. Promotional materials produced by local communities and, more importantly, *Sunset* magazine similarly expressed a sense of regional identity based on healthy, mainly recreational contact with the outdoors. Collectively, they created a regionalism based on an

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outdoor lifestyle and on an architecture that facilitated this kind of living. As architectural styles changed between 1880 and 1960, from an eclectic historicism to a modified version of the International Style, the regional sensibilities remained and manifested a kind of "antimodernism"[3] which, as demonstrated by historians Miles Orvell and T. J. Jackson Lears, was a distinct product of modern, urban, industrial civilization.[10]

****

The subject of Bay Tradition architecture merits attention because it represents a relatively novel phenomenon - the creation of urban landscapes that expressed a regional identity and cultural values. Bay Tradition buildings and cityscapes related to the region by evoking as much as possible the physical environment, by looking as much as possible like organic outgrowths of it. This mattered because affluent Bay Area residents, for whom the Bay Tradition was created, enjoyed a close relationship to nature because the region's climate and scenery were both attractive, facilitating a degree of casual contact with the outdoors not as possible elsewhere in the United States. Bay Tradition architecture reflected not only aesthetic tastes but a healthy yet cultivated lifestyle, comprising a regionalism based as much on residents' living and leisure habits as on design.

This work is relevant to the fields of landscape history and regionalism, both of which include a variety of works which cover ground similar to this one. In the former field, several works examine how affluent urbanites created "middle landscapes," low-density urban forms that combined urban amenities and easy access to city centers with a domesticated form of nature, upon which the new suburbanites did not depend for their livelihoods. John Stilgoe's *Borderland*, David Schuyler's *The New Urban Landscape*, and Mona Domosh's *Invented Cities* all examine this development in considerable detail, showing the roles

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that transportation technology, near worship of nature, and the changing class and ethnic landscapes of the inner city played in the development of the American suburb. However, only Domosh considers the role of regional identity to an appreciable degree, by demonstrating how sense of place influenced the different public landscapes of New York and Boston.

Studies of regionalism consider a variety of ways in which sense of place is expressed. For example, Robert Dorman's *Revolt of the Provinces* examines the art and literary movements of the Midwest and South during the 1920s and '30s, depicting them as antimodern reactions against the growing tide of modernism in American culture, which, ironically, manifested a kind of modernism themselves. This intellectual trend also figures in Lears and Orvell, who place antimodernism firmly within the key period of modernization in the United States, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also, Dona Brown's *Inventing New England* studies the role of tourism in shaping sense of place, and David Whisnant's *All That Is Native and Fine* examines the dynamics of cultural appropriation and how regional cultures are created more by outsiders as by the locals themselves.[11]

However, this field lacks a single study that illustrates how urban landscapes can themselves manifest regionalist sensibilities. This body of work includes works which discuss the creation of both regional identity and the role of nature in shaping urban landscapes, but none approaches landscape as a valid regionalist expression on a par with music, literature, or visual art. This dissertation aims to connect these and to illustrate how Bay Area architects and their elite clients shaped natural-looking cityscapes that reflected regional attitudes toward style, building materials, and the San Francisco region's uniquely mild climate and distinctive scenery. The sum of these efforts was an urban landscape that, unlike others elsewhere and

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unlike other forms of regionalist expression, expressed sense of place through the place itself.

This work also focuses largely on the architects rather than the clients, since they were building for an admittedly small but influential group of affluent Bay Area residents, who were often socially connected to architects like Bernard Maybeck and William Wurster and subscribed to their views of design and nature. Evidence for this rests in their tendency to subscribe to *Sunset* magazine, which from the 1910s promoted the kind of cultivated yet rustic home designs that Bay Tradition architects created. The Bay Tradition was shaped and guided largely by architects more so than clients, who often expressed their ideas of the Bay Area's uniqueness in writing, either in books or in the architectural press.

In addition, this dissertation relies on *Sunset* rather than Bay Area literary works, because the magazine centered on lifestyle and shared a deep connection to the factors that inspired the region's architecture. *Sunset*, which the Southern Pacific Railroad created in 1898 to promote tourism along its routes, gradually became a magazine promoting a "Western lifestyle" based on prosperity, sophisticated tastes, and an appreciation for the outdoors - all attributes of affluent Bay Area culture by 1900. While the magazine drew its inspiration from existing sensibilities, it expanded and reshaped this mode of living throughout the twentieth century, helping promote the Bay Tradition well beyond its birthplace. It is worth noting, though, that both the Bay Area's literature and architecture shared a sense of liberation from convention, initially fostered by the area's isolation and sheer distance from the East. According to author Gerald Haslam, the Bay Area's late nineteenth-century writers "reflected a distinctness still associated with the region . . . [and] defined themselves as a people liberated from the Puritan past. . . ."[12] Furthermore, says

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literature scholar Michael Davidson, the Bay Area embodied both marginality and cosmopolitanism, which helped feed its sense of distinctiveness and its ways of framing its lifestyles and aesthetic sensibilities.[13]

****

Chapter one, "Creating the Bay Area: The Beginnings of Regional Consciousness, 1850-1920," explores not only the Bay Area's early development, but also its creation as a distinct place in the minds of its residents and observers. Locals' sense of place was established well before 1920. It developed as a result of various factors - imported expectations that experience in California modified, Southern Pacific's efforts to attract tourists and new residents, reactions to the attractive climate and scenery, the rise of a cosmopolitan yet relatively relaxed culture, and the area's constant economic growth, which offered the promise of affluence. The result of these was a regionalism based partly on physical and mental well-being, as well as cultural sophistication (Bay Area architect Willis Polk deemed this trait "cultivated rusticity").[14] Bay Tradition architecture reflected these and manifested them as regional traits from its inception.

Chapter two, "Building Naturally: Architectural Practice in the Bay Area and the Beginnings of the Bay Tradition, 1876-1929," is a short history of the Bay Area's architectural practice. It traces the development of the Bay Tradition from its origins in the late 1870s to the late 1920s, when the historicist phase of the Bay Tradition ended. Contemporary attitudes about urban landscapes and the natural environment merged with the area's sense of identity and cosmopolitan character to spawn the architecture that characterized the Bay Area's affluent neighborhoods of San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland, and other surrounding communities. These were "sylvan suburbs," distinguished by their well-wooded landscapes and domestic architecture

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that stressed stylistic informality, a somewhat uncultivated look, and structural elements that blurred boundaries between outdoors and indoors, making contact with the outdoors a regular part of daily life.

Chapter three, "The Modern Pastoral: The Bay Tradition and Modernism, 1926-1945," discusses the advent of International Style modern architecture in the United States and that ways that Bay Area architects incorporated it. While the forces of modernism were considered destructive by some Americans (who reacted, as Dorman shows, by reasserting regional identities), the Bay Tradition's practitioners incorporated the new idiom rather seamlessly into the existing ethic, giving Bay Area modernism a regional flavor that defied modernist orthodoxy. In addition, when its architects were tapped to build for the federal government during World War II, the Bay Tradition was transformed from a strictly residential idiom to a commercial and institutional one as well. As a result, the Bay Tradition survived and even throve as a viable regionalist idiom and became much more visible in the region's suburbs, though it also marked more clearly the Bay Tradition's long-lasting class bias.

Chapter four, "Paradise Built: The Bay Tradition and the Bay Area, 1940-1970," concerns the Bay Tradition's spread throughout its region, as a residential, commercial, and institutional form. During this period, the region's population rose dramatically, necessitating not only increased home building but also schools, commercial facilities, and industrial complexes. Architects like Ernest Kump and William Wurster designed numerous schools, office complexes, and public buildings in the modernist version of the Bay Tradition, giving workplaces and other institutions in the region a less formal appearance than they had elsewhere. In addition, the housing projects Wurster and Vernon DeMars built brought this formerly exclusive style to the lower

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class, though it did not genuinely diminish the Bay Tradition's class orientation.

In addition, the tract homes of builder Joseph Eichler brought the Bay Tradition to a broader, if still relatively affluent, clientele. The style's presence on the Bay Area landscape reinforced its regional identity simply by being almost ubiquitous; however, working-class homebuyers found Eichler homes too expensive, preferring economy over style by choosing cheaper tract houses by "merchant builders" like David Bohannon. As a result, the Bay Tradition's appeal was limited to those who could afford it, making it a regionalism that excluded much of its own region's population.

Chapter five, "Common Grounds: The Bay Tradition Compared to Other Modernisms," compares and contrasts the Bay Area's regionalist architecture with the California bungalow, the Midwest's Prairie style, and Scandinavia's modernism. These three regionalist forms share some of the Bay Tradition's Arts and Crafts influence and tried to evoke natural landscapes, though in different ways and often with different motives. Like the Bay Tradition, the bungalow and Scandinavian modernism had an antimodern orientation which reacted against urban industrial life. This motivated these idioms to use affinity with nature (though the use of unadorned materials) as a way of making urban life seem more authentic. The Prairie style was not antimodern, but, like the Bay Tradition, it used local materials and low-lying rectilinear forms to foster an affinity between architecture and the flat Midwestern landscape. All of these styles were also oriented toward the affluent, as was the Bay Tradition throughout its history. Studying these idioms demonstrates the breadth of antimodernism in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architecture, as well as the factors which contribute to architectural regionalism.

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Chapter six, the conclusion, examines the Bay Tradition's importance and relevance to various fields, among them regionalism and landscape history. The Bay Tradition had largely run its course by 1970, as architects deserted it for other styles (particularly postmodernism). It did not address growing regional concerns about overdevelopment; in fact, it became part of the proverbial problem instead of a solution to preserving the Bay Area's scenery and environment. The environmental movement (which had deep roots in the area) rose anew in the mid-1960s, defeating a large planned Bay Tradition development in Marin County. In recent years, the Bay Area has grown more crowded and urbanized, apparently relegating the Bay Tradition and its efforts to evoke a semi-pastoral Bay Area to history.

The Bay Tradition represented a unique phenomenon in the history of American landscapes. The Bay Area was not the only region in the United States to have sparsely-developed, well-wooded suburbs, but it was the only one where the affluent landscape demonstrated a valid regionalism. It expressed architects' and well-to-do residents' embrace of a clement form of nature as one means of personal and social well-being. The Bay Tradition incorporated it with domestic and, later, commercial and public architecture in ways that express sense of place by evoking and celebrating the place as the key to happiness and fulfillment.

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[1]"Modernism" is defined here as a group of European-influenced architectural styles which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These embraced rectilinear forms and often lacked décor, though it also included a contradictory "antimodern" strain, such as Arts and Crafts, which reacted against the industrial world.

[2]The Bay Area is commonly defined as the nine counties surrounding San Francisco and San Pablo bays - San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa, Sonoma, and Marin.

[3]Lewis Mumford, "The Sky Line: Status Quo," *The New Yorker* (11 October 1947), 109.

[4]Bay Tradition architecture is distinguished by its reliance on redwood, unfinished wooden surfaces or colors which appear in the surrounding natural environment, and use of patios or verandas which

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serve as "outdoor rooms," thus blurring boundaries between interior and exterior spaces. It has also been called "Bay Area Tradition, "Bay Region style," "Bay style," and "Bay Region modernism."

[5]Anonymous, "Is There a "Bay Region Style?" *Architectural Review* (1949), 89-92.

[6]"Regionalism," "regional identity" and "sense of place" are used interchangeably throughout this work, all meaning the idea of a place's uniqueness and distinctive cultural traits and practices.

[7]Anonymous, *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1949), 7; Anonymous, "Is There a Bay Area Style?", *Architectural Record* 105:5 (May 1949), 91-95.

[8]Leslie Mandelson Freudenheim, *Building with Nature* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), 7-12.

[9]"Antimodernism" refers specifically to aesthetic trends in the late nineteenth century inspired by the influence of urbanization and industrial growth in Europe and the United States. Discussed further in chapter three, it applies to artists' and architects' efforts to counteract what they considered the ugliness of industrially-produced or -influenced goods or buildings. Its most prominent manifestation was the Arts and Crafts movement, which exalted handcrafts and inspired art and architecture which tried to appear as pre-industrial in appearance as possible.

[10]T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace* (New York: Pantheon, 1981); Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

[11]Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Robert Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces: the Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); David Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: the Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

[12]Gerald Haslam, ed., *Many Californias* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 45.

[13]Michael Davison, *The San Francisco Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-13.

[14]Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1983), 11.

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CHAPTER ONE: "CREATING THE BAY AREA: THE BEGINNINGS OF REGIONAL IDENTITY, 1850-1920"

The San Francisco Bay Area's sense of its own regional identity began coalescing well before 1900, due to various historical, social, economic, and geographical factors that reinforced the persistent sense among elite observers and residents that it, like California as a whole, was a unique, charmed place. From the late eighteenth century onward, California was deemed a quasi-paradise where various groups could realize their ambitions of wealth and liberation. According to historian Kevin Starr:

> [European and Anglo-American] travelers knew they were witnessing a unique society and an incomparable natural setting. Their letters, reports, journals, diaries, and memoirs expressed patterns of experience which would in time be the founding elements of a new identity. Writing of Old California, they anticipated the new.[1]

Many of these accounts noted not only the pleasant climate and attractive scenery, but also the fact that the ruling Spanish and Mexicans left the place poorly developed and ill-defended. Early visitors, especially explorers and military men like Russian adventurer Nikolai Rezanov and British mariner George Vancouver, first suggested what California could become in the hands of an energetic, enterprising nation.[2]

To the first large wave of migrants, who arrived from 1848 onward seeking gold and later riches in other efforts, the San Francisco Bay Area (the first part of California to urbanize on a large scale) occupied a special place in the American popular mind. It represented the best aspects of the American dream - superior climate and scenery, cultural advancement, the chance of prosperity, more relaxed lifestyles, and healthier living. As will be demonstrated later, promotional materials and popular magazines promoted these aspects of the Bay Area, extending its promise of wealth, healthy but upright living, and even

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spiritual and intellectual improvement to the rest of the nation. In a sense, California's promoters defined the state as the best aspects of America combined into one place.

Also, the Bay Area came to represent a kind of primitive sophistication, which manifested in its architecture and lifestyles before 1900 and persisted throughout much of the twentieth century. Partly as a result of the Gold Rush, which drew migrants from literally around the globe, an uncommonly diverse, cosmopolitan, highly urbanized society grew in the San Francisco region during the late nineteenth century. This gave this bustling yet visually idyllic area a mixed, eclectic, relatively tolerant character. As a result, the Bay Area embraced various paradoxes, being at once industrial, pastoral, racist, tolerant, isolated, and cosmopolitan. These factors combined to create a regionalism based upon the area's visual distinctiveness and the local culture's relative sophistication, and this was perhaps best borne out in the region's architecture, which began as a local variant of the Arts and Crafts movement but became both visually and (as will be shown later) ideologically unique after 1880 and continued to manifest local attitudes toward nature and other cultures until well into the late twentieth century.[3]

BIRTH OF AN IMAGE

One can argue that California already had a distinctive regional identity well before the Gold Rush brought the region national attention. Starr maintains that European and Anglo-American explorers, merchants, and travelers considered the place not merely scenic but charmed in a variety of ways. It offered improvements on their previous homes, not only with better weather, healthier climate, and attractive landscapes, but also greater opportunities for wealth and personal well-being. Chief among these migrants were New Englanders, who

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comprised many of the goldseekers and represented the vanguard of American settlement in the Pacific. Like previous European visitors to the Pacific Coast, they considered California an improved version of regions they had either previously inhabited or imagined, with vast, untapped potential.[4]

The process by which California's image (and Bay Area regionalism) was created is similar to that of Appalachian regionalism, as David Whisnant discusses in *All That Is Native and Fine*. Appalachian culture's "revival" early in the twentieth century was really more an intervention by outsiders, who fused elements of native culture with foreign attributes imposed on the region because they seemed appropriate to what the area's culture should entail. Often, he claims, outsiders' role in regionalism satisfies "the appetite of outsiders for the romantic, picturesque aspects of an alien culture distant enough to be exotic . . . but close enough to be noticed."[5] Whisnant adds that the resulting culture "is really congruent with the culture that is actually there. It is a selection, an arrangement, an accommodation to preconceptions . . . [and] is a hybrid at best."[6] In California, Yankee outsiders who settled there between 1840 and 1900 selected what they thought appropriate and filtered out what offended them.

In *Two Years Before the Mast*, Yankee author Richard Henry Dana, Jr., expressed mid-nineteenth-century Americans' interest in and attitudes toward California by hailing its economic and social potential, while also lamenting the way its "indolent" Mexican rulers and citizens failed to tap into its vast possibilities. Like other Yankees, Dana (who disdained Hispanics and called them "the laziest people on the face of the earth"[7]) believed California needed enlightenment (meaning Anglo dominance, the Protestant faith, and American commercial abilities[8]), but was also impressed with Californio society's emphasis on refined manners and aristocratic comportment. He

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remarked, "Among the Spaniards there is no working class . . . and every rich man looks like a grandee, and every poor scamp like a broken-down gentleman."[9]

San Francisco-born novelist Gertrude Atherton, who renounced California as too new and coarse for her faux-aristocratic sensibilities, echoed this sentiment in her novels. Throughout her long literary career, which ended with her death in 1945, Atherton displayed her romantic view of Southern planters, from whom she claimed descent, and likened them in vague ways to California's Hispanic landowners. She said of the Californios:

> It is true that the skull content of those old rancheros and caballeros, with a few notable exceptions, may have been inferior, but they contributed a chapter of elegance, romance, and beauty unsurpassed by any other state in the Union; they knew how to live. . . .[10]

Other accounts by figures like John C. Fremont, Thomas O. Larkin, and Thomas Starr King hailed California as a place of overwhelming potential for Americans to improve themselves and, perhaps, the country at large. Such views attest to the place's unique image, attributable at least in part to its pleasant, alluring climate and geography.[11]

Following the Mexican War and Gold Rush, the regional identity of California continued to embrace not only its physical environment but also its potential for personal "improvement" on the terms of new arrivals. This was especially true of the Bay Area, which urbanized well before Los Angeles and was arguably the state's financial, political, and cultural center before 1910. The Gold Rush brought a long-lasting migration of New Englanders and upstate New Yorkers, who formed the nucleus of the Bay Area's commercial and intellectual elite and, in some cases, saw the Bay Area as an improved New England. In particular, San Francisco was considered a healthier, sunnier, yet equally industrious and moral version of Boston - a sort of fusion of

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New England morality and industry with a mitigated Mediterranean sensuality and healthiness.

David Starr Jordan, the Unitarian minister who helped found Stanford University in 1891, certainly embraced this view, aiming to make California the next "city on a hill," as though picking up where the Puritans left off two centuries earlier. However, he aimed to transcend what he considered New England's smugness and rigidity. In California he saw a balance between liberation from tradition and adherence to it, claiming, "The development of the individual among her sons and daughters is the greatest contribution of California as a whole to American civilization."[12]

Joseph Worcester, a Swedenborgian minister who left Boston for San Francisco in 1869, saw California as perhaps the perfect manifestation of God in nature, anticipating John Muir's views by more than twenty years. He used these notions to inspire the Bay Area's architectural idiom (the Bay Tradition), which eschewed stylistic orthodoxy for an informal approach that evoked an idealized nature. Worcester moved to the Bay Area mainly for professional reasons, but he was also drawn by his love for the region's magnificent natural scenery and simple vernacular architecture (mainly Hispanic adobe homes, with their hipped roofs and long verandas).[13] These were his inspiration for creating his own Piedmont home in 1876 (Figure 2-1, in chapter two), the structure that arguably marked the starting point for the Bay Tradition.

BEGINNINGS OF REGIONAL IDENTITY

By 1900, San Francisco was being gradually recognized as the hub of a cohesive region, though the precise cultural origins of this are vague. In part, the Bay Area's regional identity emerged from San Francisco's dominance on virtually all fronts - the economic and infrastructural in particular. In *Imperial San Francisco,* Gray Brechin

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depicts San Francisco as the hub of an empire or a "contado," a powerful city-state like medieval Venice, which controlled and drew resources from its surrounding hinterlands. San Francisco had the population, capital, and industry that no other cities in the region could rival; its commercial demands and geographical limitations led it to control and consume northern California's natural and human resources. Because the city lacked an adequate water supply, enough space for its industries, and links to the transcontinental railroad, it drew from surrounding counties and moved factories and other facilities to the East Bay or to the Peninsula, all the while maintaining centralized control. Also, in the late nineteenth century, San Francisco was the undisputed seat of cultural and intellectual power, with the most theaters, artists, and professionals (among them architects).[14]

By 1880, most Bay Area industries were located outside San Francisco but were controlled from offices that remained there, making it the hub of a growing regional commercial infrastructure. In addition, it appropriated San Mateo County's abundant natural water supply and colonized the peninsula as well, making Belmont, Burlingame, and Hillsborough among the city's first and wealthiest suburbs.[15] Brechin mentions a 1912 effort to create a "Greater San Francisco," which made the state ballot but failed to win sufficient support; clearly, the Bay Area was by then considered a single region, though politics failed to underscore this fact.[16]

Among sources dating from around 1900, there is a tendency to make San Francisco synonymous with not only the Bay Area, but California at large. The most prominent of these was *Sunset*, the self-proclaimed "magazine of Western living" that began as the Southern Pacific's promotional tool but was eventually reinvented as the chief herald of the emerging California lifestyle. Founded by the railroad in San Francisco in 1898, *Sunset*'s purpose until 1914 was to promote tourist

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locations along its western lines and to draw tourists from Eastern markets. It spoke very little to residents of the West and did not initially promote a "Western lifestyle." In a sense, it viewed the West as a recreational colony of the East, despite being itself a Western creation and despite its growing West Coast readership.

Sunset published at least one article about San Francisco in each issue during its first few years in print. In 1899, the unnamed author of "The To-morrow of San Francisco" depicted the city as a recumbent center of a region, claiming, "While San Francisco has been resting, a storing of reserve power has gone on in the growth and prosperity of tributary cities and towns," implying that cities like Oakland were part of San Francisco's sphere.[17] In the same year, another unknown author commented that Oakland ("to San Francisco what Brooklyn is to New York"), Berkeley, and San Mateo and Contra Costa counties were virtual extensions of San Francisco rather than simply nearby areas.

Among local art and architecture circles between 1890 and 1920, there existed a parallel tendency to see the Bay Area as one (though again this requires a bit of inference). Charles Keeler, a disciple of the Arts and Crafts movement and champion of Bay Tradition architecture as a sort of reform effort, wrote in *The Craftsman* that the Bay Area was unified visually, because views from the hills of San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland gave one the impression that the area was a visual whole, centered around the bay and sharing the same hilly, wooded landscape; for Keeler, "the city is but a fragment of a broad panorama," implying that he saw San Francisco as a part of something greater, at least aesthetically if not structurally.[18]

CLIMATE AND NATURE

The Bay Area's distinctive climate and fertile, picturesque landscapes fostered a relationship with nature that Americans elsewhere

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lacked the opportunity to enjoy. To farmers, it meant the promise of agricultural wealth, since the Bay Area's rich soils and mild, semi-arid climate made it possible to grow a wide range of crops. Before 1890, wheat grew throughout the northern and eastern counties, helping make the East Bay town of Port Costa the nation's leading wheat-shipping port in the two decades around 1900.[19] Later, with the spread of railroads and the advent of irrigation, Bay Area farmers shifted toward more profitable crops like fruits, flowers, and nuts. More importantly, to the many urbanites working in San Francisco and Oakland early in the twentieth century, "nature" meant not only mild climate but also scenery, recreation, and a relationship with the outdoors that did not necessarily involve working the soil. More precisely, it meant the physical environment, preferably in an undeveloped state, or at least enough so to evoke the wild and untouched. Local communities' promotional materials stressed these factors, as will be shown later. As the region urbanized further and its transportation infrastructure linked its disparate communities, visual and physical contact with a tame, controllable form of nature remained important and grew even more desirable.

Continuing early observers' praises of California's scenery, geography, and climate, the Bay Area's local culture consistently expressed its attachment to nature. By 1900, it appeared most visibly local architecture and lifestyles. Admittedly, the Bay Area was not the only region where a popular appreciation and enthusiasm for nature throve. In *Back to Nature*, Peter Schmitt argues that denizens of late-nineteenth-century American suburbia wanted their urban landscapes scenic, less densely populated, and free of increasingly "urban" traits like overcrowding, rising crime, people of then-little-accepted ethnic groups (especially immigrants), and poor sanitary conditions. Suburbs became increasingly desirable as they became more accessible, with the

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advent of relatively affordable public rail transit by 1880. With commuting possible, middle-class urbanites increasingly moved to well tended, visually appealing, somewhat sparsely populated communities that excluded "undesirable" elements like heavy manufacturing, visual clutter (including tenements, shacks, or other lower-class housing), most types of commercial activity, and people of low class standing or different ethnic backgrounds. The United States as a whole, especially middle-class urbanites, enthusiastically embraced outdoor recreation and the desire for scenic residential building and living. In addition, many also embraced a tamed wilderness as an attractive element, not only in art but in residential landscapes as well.[20]

The Bay Area became visually different from other urban areas, however, developing its share of affluent and working-class suburbs but creating them with very different architectural and landscape sensibilities. San Francisco's satellites aimed to retain an even less developed-looking, more rustic and even idyllic appearance, making their urban areas look less typically "urban." In reaction to San Francisco's increased crowding, dirtiness, and signs of decay in its poorer quarters, more affluent residents of surrounding communities self-consciously aimed to improve urban form by including more of nature in it, keeping just enough of the machine in the garden to avoid reducing the place to primitiveness.

The best example of this is the Hillside Club in northeast Berkeley, which will be discussed later in this chapter and in chapter two. Formed in 1904 to maintain a sylvan, sparsely-developed atmosphere in that well-to-do neighborhood, the Hillside Club persuaded the city's leaders to create ordinances requiring ample planting, abundant space between houses and from house to street, and a distinctly non-urban atmosphere. However, the neighborhood also had paved, well-lit paved

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streets and at least one streetcar line, on which many residents depended to reach their jobs.

In *Borderland*, John Stilgoe demonstrates that suburbanites had little desire to toil in their newly created residential "nature." Instead, they wanted the technological, sanitary, and transportation amenities of the city, but not the city's density or squalor. In suburbia, "nature" meant a manageable, domesticated version of the outdoors - not rugged wilderness or landscapes that demanded intense labor (like farming, more an economic relationship to the outdoors than a residential one), but easily maintained, picturesque, non-working landscapes. According to Stilgoe, Victorian Americans found these visually pleasant and physically and morally healthier than either cities or the agricultural countryside.[21]

This was the case in the hilly areas of Berkeley, Oakland, and Piedmont (which separated from Oakland in 1907), which in the two decades surrounding 1900 became magnets for affluent San Franciscans who wanted proximity to their business interests but relief from the city's bustle and crowding. Their suburban homes were often informally designed (mixing elements of existing styles like Tudor, Queen Anne, and Italianate) and either set on existing wooded lots or lushly planted. In Berkeley, residents of the affluent, sylvan northeastern area formed the Hillside Club to deter what they considered the ugliness of urban growth. The club aimed to keep the rapidly developing neighborhood (which boasted a busy commercial strip and a streetcar line by 1910) from resembling the crowded, working-class flatlands area to the west. Its leader, Charles Keeler, set guidelines which residents subsequently forced the city to follow, calling for winding streets "regardless of natural contours," preservation of streams and oak trees, uniform street planting, gardens in every yard, and low-rise homes which would not obscure views of the bay. He advised: "The controlling thought in

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house-building should be simplicity and genuineness. Avoid meaningless and insincere ornament. Build of simple, natural materials, and strive for beauty in mass and proportion. . . ."[22] In his club materials, Keeler expressed the affluent Bay Area view of "nature:" low-density development that did not obliterate existing fauna or topography, but coexisted with it, even in the face of growth. Indeed, he did not argue against continued homebuilding in the Berkeley hills, nor against the streetcars many of his neighbors regularly rode.

By around 1900, the Bay Area's suburbs bore some resemblance to suburbs elsewhere in the United States, like Chicago's Riverside area or the rail-dependent suburbs of Boston and northern New Jersey. Like their counterparts, they tended to shun the rectangular street grid that characterized many central cities and created neighborhoods with winding streets, large lots, and no offending features such as factories, tanneries, jails, certain commercial activities, or ill-kept slum areas too close by. However, the domestic architecture itself was rather more eclectic and informal than in Eastern suburbs; Bay Area domestic architects paid more attention to using native building materials and plants, and especially architectural design, which tended toward the informal and seemed subordinated to surrounding views and scenery.

This mode of designing was dubbed the "Bay Area Tradition," or simply Bay Tradition by architectural historians like Leslie Freudenheim, who in turn traced its existence to the writing of Charles Keeler and others.[23] Bay Tradition was more a mindset than a list of concrete stylistic criteria. Instead, it comprised local modes of domestic, commercial, and public architectural design that developed after 1880. Its chief characteristics included sparse development and ample spaces between buildings, which were filled with abundant native trees and plants, to create a calculatedly uncultivated look.

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Also, the architecture itself represented a large departure from the American architectural mainstream. Its architects relied heavily on native woods, particularly redwood, which was plentiful in northern California and tolerated the climate well. Bay Tradition buildings were generally redwood-sided, often with unpainted shingles, exposed structural elements like posts and beams, and relatively simple decor. While some architects, like Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck, mixed historicist elements in an eclectic manner, less to conform to national trends than to create a sophisticated, even whimsical aura that spoke of the region's relatively advanced state of cultural attainment.

The Bay Tradition was the most visually identifiable manifestation of local attitudes toward not only architecture, but lifestyles, tolerance, and awareness of other cultures. It reflected a self-conscious sense of being more sophisticated, more open-minded, and yet less formal in outlook or conduct than urban areas elsewhere in America. As the Bay Tradition became more visible throughout the early and middle twentieth century, it also grew increasingly identifiable, distinct from suburban architecture elsewhere in the United States and representative of an anti-modern strain existing within the modernist canon.

BAY AREA SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Not only did this popular conception of and appreciation for nature thrive in the Bay Area, but the place's physical appearance and social landscape was at least partly shaped by the area's singularly open-minded, cosmopolitan, yet informal regional culture, a direct product of the Gold Rush.[24] The period between roughly 1848 and 1860 brought an enormous, rapid influx from not only the then-distant United States but also much of Latin America, Europe, Australia, and eastern Asia as well. These groups superimposed their laws and culture over the

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existing, recently-subordinated Hispanic population while retaining a periodic, romanticized fondness for it. The search for quick riches, which were largely elusive, not only fed a nationwide popular interest in California but also, more importantly, gave the Bay Area an ethnic diversity seldom seen elsewhere in the United States before 1900.

An early account of Bay Area diversity comes from Robert Louis Stevenson, whose travels took him to northern California in 1880, and inspired him to write a *London Magazine* article describing San Francisco's colorful society. In particular, he was struck by its heterogeneous population:

> Next, perhaps, in order of strangeness to the speed of its appearance, is the mingling of the races that combine to people it. The town is essentially not Anglo-Saxon, still more essentially not American. The Yankee and the Englishman find themselves alike in a strange country. There are none of those touches - not of nature, and I dare scarcely say of art - by which the Anglo-Saxon feels himself at home in so great a diversity of lands.[25]

Historian Glenna Matthews asserts that the Gold Rush brought a huge influx of immigrants quickly into a newly-created urban milieu that initially lacked a hegemonic leadership or an established ethnic or economic power structure. In this atmosphere, where cultural interaction was a necessity and the rules were essentially being recreated to suit the setting, San Franciscans (who fanned out into neighboring towns and counties well before 1900) developed a tolerance that included sharing others' cultural tastes, especially in decor, ideas, and cuisine. While Matthews focuses more on politics and the creation of a relatively liberal, diverse political culture, and she largely overlooks the anti-Asian Workingman's Party of the 1870s, her picture of the Bay Area neatly sums up the reasons for the area's tolerance and aura of relaxed attitudes - in short, necessity born of diversity.[26]

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Various ethnic groups, while facing discrimination from Anglos and other groups, nonetheless did not always meet such uniform hostilities as existed in the East. For example, says historian R. A. Burchell, San Francisco's Irish population (which first became numerous in 1848) suffered far less discrimination than their Northeastern compatriots and became more prosperous and politically powerful due to the newly created society's lack of homogeneity and the need for the diverse cultures to get along to some degree.[27] Also, the Chinese initially prospered due to their dogged efforts and frugal lifestyles. Though initial Chinese success brought white jealousy and later legal and economic oppression and occasional violence, the Bay Area's residents were accustomed to the presence of Chinese domestics, farm workers, laundrymen, small-business owners, and laborers. Whites often interacted with those workers on a less-than-equal footing.

Racism was virulent in northern California, initially against Hispanics and later against blacks and, more harshly, Asians. Nonetheless, the disparate groups lived in relative proximity to one another and experienced each other's cultures on some level, if only superficial ones like cuisine. This produced, if not tolerance, at least a cultural awareness and ability for members of different ethnic groups to interact somewhat smoothly. These circumstances made San Francisco a remarkably cosmopolitan city despite its isolation and newness. In one of its many articles about San Francisco, *Sunset* in 1899 hailed its home city's diversity:

> It is the most cosmopolitan American city, a community with representatives among its citizens from every nation. . . . The impress of the varied nationalities is noticeable on all sides, and their contrasting life gives a color to the thoroughfares and shops not to be seen elsewhere.[28]

In addition, the Bay Area was home to the West's first sizeable Bohemia, an island of cultural sophistication far removed from the United States' established cultural centers on the East Coast. By the

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1870s, says Kevin Starr, San Francisco built a disproportionate number of theaters, saloons, and other entertainment venues, which were patronized by people of various ethnic groups and where interchange of ideas and styles occurred constantly. Observers in the 1860s and 1870s noted San Francisco's relative cultural sophistication compared to the rest of the Far West. This they attributed to intense cultural mixing, quick prosperity, and the city's rapid growth, even in the midst of vice, violence, rising ethnic tensions, and overall instability common to Western boomtowns.[29]

San Francisco's art community, having attracted many itinerant American and European artists, grew fairly large and self-conscious, and become a distinctive presence. Bay Area artists dispersed as both the city and region grew, seeking more suitable places to work - often choosing small communities like Sausalito in Marin County, college towns like Palo Alto and Berkeley, and more remote places like Carmel, some 200 miles to the south. Their ranks included landscape painters like William Keith and photographers like Carleton Watkins, one of Yosemite's earliest chroniclers and an influence on San Francisco native Ansel Adams. Having developed a local art scene at such an early date exposed the Bay Area to art despite its remoteness and helped promote a unique and well-developed aesthetic sensibility.

URBAN GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In addition San Francisco's cultural influence, the Bay Area's creation as a cohesive region owes at least as much to the creation of its transportation systems in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and to its many communities' increasing economic interdependence. According to urban historian Charles Wollenberg, the creation of transportation networks and urban interdependence made the Bay Area a cohesive region by the end of the nineteenth century, not

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only by linking its local economies but also by dispersing its population and promoting suburban growth. Railroads were the chief catalyst for linking the Bay Area's urban and agricultural areas, with San Francisco as their commercial, cultural, and transportation hub. As other cities developed their own economies in the late nineteenth century (Oakland as an industrial center and railroad terminus, San Jose as a prosperous farming community), they became increasingly interdependent because of their reliance on railroads. This circumstance gave the railroads their power, especially the Southern Pacific, which came to dominate California politics by 1900.[30]

Wollenberg adds that the railroads allowed San Francisco's large immigrant population (sixty percent of the city's population by 1880) to spread in search of work, in a variety of occupations. The Irish formed blue-collar communities throughout the area; Italians farmed and ranched, especially in Santa Clara, Marin, and Sonoma counties; the Portuguese formed large communities in and around Oakland and San Jose, often farming, ranching, or working in factories; and the Chinese did farm and industrial labor virtually everywhere.[31] Railroads linked markets and spurred both agricultural and industrial development throughout the region, and the need for labor in various fields helped ethnic communities spread and reproduce outside San Francisco. By 1900, much of the Bay Area shared San Francisco's ethnic and racial diversity, giving the region at large a distinctive social identity while being structurally and demographically unified.

The railroads also helped expand the Bay Area as commuter lines were created to serve San Francisco's growing middle class, many of whom sought respite from what they considered an increasingly ugly, overcrowded central city. Horse-drawn rail cars appeared in San Francisco by 1860, and in Oakland more than a decade later; these were followed by the city's municipal railway, created in 1873 with Andrew

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Hallidie's invention of the cable car. Within the next decade, the Southern Pacific Railroad took over local ferry service between Oakland and San Francisco, linking it with local rail service and spurring residential growth in communities like Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley, and San Mateo and southern Marin counties.[32]

By 1890, the Bay Area's commuter suburbs were well established and easily accessible by rail or water from San Francisco. As elsewhere in the nation, railroads helped accelerate the growth of the Bay Area's suburban communities. By the 1910s, Southern Pacific operated various commuter lines throughout the Bay Area, especially in San Mateo, Alameda, Marin, and Contra Costa counties, where growing numbers of middle-class commuters lived and relied upon rail and ferry transportation to reach their jobs in San Francisco. These suburbs offered not only the larger lots, sparser development, lush landscaping, and exclusion of unwanted elements that their counterparts elsewhere did, but (as will be demonstrated below) they were also promoted by the railroads and by local chambers of commerce as uncommonly scenic, even idyllic places well-suited to people seeking natural beauty and rustic living.

RAILROADS AND THE MEDIA

While railroads served as the structural glue that connected the Bay Area's nine counties, they also helped shape California's image in both its own eyes and those of the nation as a whole. When the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, it not only made California far more accessible to other Americans (who previously had to brave the overland trails' dangers or endure a long, perilous sea voyage to get there) but also increased its visibility in the public eye. The railroads, which owned vast tracts of land and wanted increased ridership on their lines, were the chief catalyst in the creation of

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Western tourism and the popular view of the West as the domain of a healthy, relatively unspoiled kind of nature. They used their vast public-relations machinery to promote the West as "natural" yet not threatening, and in the process they depicted California as an idyllic yet sufficiently urbane paradise, suitable for urban middle-class visitors yet "natural" enough in scenery and climate to offer them the kind of nature experience they sought.[33]

In the three decades before 1920, the Bay Area's various communities promoted themselves intensely, both through the railroads and by publishing their own books and pamphlets singing the praises of each section. Each county or community marketed specific aspects of the Bay Area vision according to what it could offer new residents. For example, San Francisco promoted its own sophistication, scenery, and urban attractions like monuments, restaurants, hotels, and shopping; industrialized Oakland sought new settlers aiming to start their own businesses and contribute to the city's prosperity; Santa Clara and Contra Costa counties aimed to lure farmers with promises of fertile soil, ideal weather, and sufficient amenities; and both Marin and San Mateo counties, San Francisco's closest suburbs, sold the kind of domesticated nature then popular in the United States, "wild" enough to be pleasant and healthy, yet neither too remote nor too undeveloped to appeal to middle class people migrating to suburbia.

Oakland, after San Francisco the Bay Area's most urbanized and industrialized community, has long been tagged as "the Brooklyn of the Pacific," comparing its relationship to San Francisco with that of Brooklyn to Manhattan - the working-class, residential/industrial "second city" to the more sophisticated metropolitan hub. However, in its promotional materials from the turn of the twentieth century, Oakland aimed to offer all aspects of the Bay Area's appeal and present itself as the best of what California could offer.

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George Calderwood's *Oakland, "Athens of the Pacific"* (1897) offers clear insights into how that city aimed to market itself to potential new residents, particularly those who could do something good for Oakland and not spoil the place's appeal. Aimed explicitly at Eastern readers seeking to start mercantile or manufacturing businesses, the book is full of statistics and practical information emphasizing the solid state of local agriculture and manufacturing, as well as the absence of blizzards or intense heat (which would not only cause discomfort but inhibit business). Calderwood makes clear that Oakland seeks only those who can help Oakland (and thus belong there); one section, "A Few Don't's," urges aimless people or those seeking riches without hard work not to settle there, and especially not to come if one had been cast out of previous hometowns. "It will be dangerous," Calderwood cautions.[34] However, he concedes that if a poor man "has good metal in him (with the accent on 'good'), he can do as well here as anywhere."[35] This work aims at a select group of migrants, those who can help the region and fulfill its potential for prosperity and upright living. Oakland, if not the Bay Area as a whole, thus appears as a selective Arcadia, aware of its image and willing to guard it by luring only those able to perpetuate it.

Similarly, Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties were both rich agricultural regions long before 1900, both specializing in relatively lucrative crops like nuts, apricots, plums, grapes, peaches, cherries, and other fruits that thrive in mild, dry climates. Like Oakland, both produced promotional materials that aimed at a select group - specifically, middle-class farmers who would ostensibly appreciate what either place would offer and who would in turn prosper there, helping maintain those counties' images.

Santa Clara County's Chamber of Commerce and Board of Supervisors energetically promoted the area in the 1910s as "the Valley of Heart's

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Delight," a name evoking pastoral happiness and aiming at people who would appreciate what it had to offer. The San Jose Chamber of Commerce, in a 1905 pamphlet called simply *Santa Clara County, California*, followed Calderwood's example to a degree, appealing to the "right" sort of newcomer who would fit the area's self-image and appreciate its attributes:

> To the tourist it presents every attraction California can offer, and many no other section has. To the capitalist, no place can offer greater ratios of increase in value of investments or greater natural facilities favorable to success. To the home seeker with small means, yet enough to secure a good home among pleasant surroundings, this valley offers a true business opening, one which any sensibly inclined mind will recognize upon full investigation.[36]

It continues by adding, "Our people are above the average in intelligence, are appreciative of the best in life because they have prospered in a naturally rich section."[37] This bit of Bay Area promotion not only hailed natural advantages, but also asserted that the better kind of people belonged there.

Another, more insightful promotional work from 1915, mundanely named *Santa Clara County, California*, but tellingly subtitled *California Lands for Health, California Fruits for Wealth*, promises two of the key aspects of the state's popular image - prosperity and well-being, both of which hinged upon the Bay Area vision of a benevolent, helpful nature. Like Calderwood's Oakland tome, this small work (by promotional writer Leigh Irvine) offered practical praises and enticements, emphasizing soil, weather, good roads and sanitation, and scenery; here, "nature" was an economic entity but one tied closely to established Bay Area values. The work says nothing about cosmopolitan culture, but it does mention nearby Stanford University and other local colleges, hinting at cultural attainment by claiming that the area is not an ignorant backwater. It also mentions the area's many churches, to indicate the quality of the area's citizens, and, like Oakland's

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promotion, seeks the right newcomers: "Into the economic, political and social life of this county all good and upright people are welcomed on precisely equal terms."[38] The appeal is middle-class, money-conscious, and focused more on economic matters than on recreation or culture. While Bay Area identity rests on more than economic matters, the promotional materials in each community imply a set of shared traits, which also mark Bay Area identity as a middle-class phenomenon.

Marin County, since the 1890s a favored suburb of San Francisco, was still largely rural in the early 1900s and consciously cultivated both its rustic charms and advantages for urbanites seeking more charming homes. *In Tamal Land*, a promotional work written by Helen Bingham in 1906, evokes the Unitarian ministers who saw God in nature and praised the Bay Area for its "holy" landscapes. It opens with a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson:

> A secret nook in a pleasant land,
> Whose groves the frolic fairies planned,
> Where arches green, the livelong day,
> Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
> And vulgar feet have never trod
> Spots that are sacred to thought and God.[39]

Her portrait of Marin promotes the notion that Bay Area boosters and the railroads aimed to foster - that the Bay Area offered everything to anyone capable of appreciating its charms and amenities, particularly middle-class urbanites seeking suburban homes. She dwells on its visual charms, such as its hills and abundant creeks, and on the prospect of rustic living, albeit with amenities like telephones, electricity, sanitation, and rail and ferry access to San Francisco. Bingham even aims to depict the county as not entirely civilized, claiming that "the march of civilization . . . so often leaves nature's handiwork crushed, broken, and even obliterated. . . ."[40] In Marin, she claims, nature (by which, one assumes, she means scenery and little-developed landscapes) remains almost intact and accessible to the city. In addition, she

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claims that rustic Marin, with its Indian and Hispanic heritage, is neither a static place nor anathema to pleasant suburban living, progress, or the promise of economic gain:

> While prolific in legends and memories, history is not the only vivifying current in Marin, and though linked inseparably with the past, she is not a worn and decrepit matron relying on artifice solely to revive her charms, but a young and vigorous maiden, in whom the ambitions, powers, and possibilities are all centered but untried.[41]

Basically, Bingham evokes the same sense of natural beauty and potential for development that early observers sensed, though she sees the place through a significantly more romantic (and gendered) lens.

By the 1910s, *Sunset* magazine had changed its focus and assumed a similar promotional direction, though more broadly and eloquently than the area's chambers of commerce. In 1914, a group of its more literary-minded senior editors, finding *Sunset*'s tourism focus too narrow, formed Woodhead, Field and Company and bought the magazine from the railroad. Soon thereafter, the new owners proclaimed the magazine's altered focus:

> The business of the Magazine has developed to such magnitude that its operation has become a frequent source of embarrassment to the company, whose business is not that of a publisher. As originally conceived, *Sunset* portrayed, in pictures and text, the beauties and opportunities of the territories served by the railroad. It aimed to do nothing more than this and it carefully avoided serving the company's interests in any other way.[42]

Afterward, the magazine noticeably shifted from strictly promoting tourist venues to expounding on the emerging Western lifestyle. This was aimed less at visitors and more at residents or potential migrants to the West Coast. While *Sunset* continued to promote popular tourist venues like Yellowstone, Glacier, and Yosemite, it also wrote as much for the West as about it, claiming to have its proverbial finger on "the pulse of the Pacific."[43] It offered readers advice on choosing and decorating homes, ideas for outdoor recreation, recipes, and from 1914 to 1928, selections from Western authors and poets.

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The idea of what Western living meant became central to the magazine, as shown by the introduction of "The Home in the West" shortly after Woodhead, Field took control of *Sunset*. This column featured different styles of building and decorating, all of which aimed to be specifically "Western." A typical featured home was simple in design (usually a bungalow or Shingle Style house), made either of white stucco or unpainted wood, with little decoration beyond the materials themselves, and set in a lushly planted, semi-rustic or suburban location. The editors emphasized such homes' low costs, unadorned, "natural" aesthetic appeal, and evocation of "nature," here meaning the tamer, more beneficial aspects of the outdoors (like gardening, entertaining on the patio, or gentle outdoor recreation).

A typical "Home in the West" column, September 1917's "The Heart of the House is the Patio," shifted the focus of a family home from the parlor or living room to the outdoors, making the backyard into a well-kept outside room of sorts, casually blurring the separation between indoors and outdoors. Another, "Who Wants a Big House in California, Anyway?" (December 1917), promoted the small, handsomely appointed wooden or stucco bungalow as the ideal California home for its simplicity and comfort. In both cases, Bay Area lifestyles and designs in particular were depicted - partly because the magazine was published there (and still is, though its offices have moved to suburban Menlo Park), but mainly because the homes featured in the magazine offered distinctly Bay Area modes of building and living.

As described in *Sunset*, Bay Area homes were informal in design, owing nothing to historical styles or even standard Eastern ones like Cape Cod or Colonial. They were located outside central cities in sylvan settings; even on small lots, they are lushly planted. Bay Area houses evoked a sophisticated, comfortable kind of simple, "natural" living because of their woodsy decor and ample patios and porches.

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Hardly cabins, though, they usually featured handsome libraries, fully appointed kitchens and bathrooms, amenities like telephones and electricity, and sometimes servants' quarters. The "Western" home was actually the middle-class suburban Bay Area residence, modern enough for comfort yet primitive enough (at least superficially) to bear out urbanites' anti-urban attitudes.

BEGINNINGS OF THE BAY TRADITION

Ambivalence toward the city - appreciation of its amenities and economic opportunities, but also rejection of its crowding and physical ugliness - lies at the heart of not only *Sunset* but also of the Bay Area's architectural tradition. This tradition was less a specific style than an eclectic combination of styles and attitudes that attest to the Bay Area's common regional character, centered around a core of cosmopolitan, yet informal values.

In the midst of a region that prided itself on balancing scenic beauty with development and prosperity, the desire to retain some connection with nature persisted well into the twentieth century, and it gained importance even as the Bay Area became more densely populated and dominated by the automobile. This desire manifested itself partly in the battles to preserve undeveloped open spaces, but it became most visible in the region's architecture, whose creators consciously tried to convey the Bay Area's most prominent cultural attributes. Its common qualities were: 1) visual attractiveness without rigid adherence to tradition; 2) appreciation of and attachment to the natural setting; 3) an eclectic awareness of various cultural styles; 4) the desire to balance urban prosperity and conveniences with rustic charm; and 5) and the desire for attractive, prosperous-looking (but not too conservative) homes and communities.

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A large part of the reason for the Bay Area's eclectic approach to architecture was necessity. According to Gunther Barth, as San Francisco grew rapidly between 1850 and 1880, architects and builders were often faced with a lack of conventional building materials like brick. The city's isolation from the urban East forced builders to alter existing architectural designs and styles to suit their material limitations. San Francisco, which the Gold Rush made an "instant community" (much like Denver became a decade later with its own mineral rush), was initially a city of wood, with conventional styles (especially the Italianate) adapted to wooden construction and smaller scale. Says Barth, quoting an architecture critic of the late nineteenth century, "Contemporary architecture is original only in the adaption of mixed styles to the uses of modern society."[43] Essentially, the necessity of scaling down and altering the appearance of existing styles produced innovation in architecture, and the result was less a new style than a set of new attitudes toward using existing styles. In the Bay Area, a new, modern society in the late 1800s because of its diversity and rapid prosperity, architecture was adapted to suit local needs, limitations, and broader tolerances. Barth concedes that the region's architects did not initially aim to create a new style. In imitating existing styles, however, they had to change their buildings' features for material reasons.

In domestic and non-domestic architecture alike, the Bay Tradition did not repudiate nature, seeing it instead as a convenience and a benefit. Bay Tradition architects aimed to imitate and evoke its natural surroundings visually, and to allow access to the mild outdoor climate, since there few extremes from which to shield local homes' dwellers. Other areas of the country lacked the same ability to embrace the outdoors that the Bay Area provided. Its absence of extreme temperatures, high humidity, or even heavy rainfall (it averages roughly

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twenty inches annually, mostly concentrated between November and May) made the outdoors less daunting to locals, who embraced their climate and geography not only for their scenic appeal but because doing so would not cause physical discomfort.

While the nature craze permeated American life around 1900, it did not manifest itself in regional architecture elsewhere as it did in the Bay Area, where attitudes toward the natural environment were not only deeply rooted in the popular mind but also confirmed by geography. Architects translated these attitudes to the built environment, expressing the area's sense of place in urban landscapes that attested to the cosmopolitan population, eclectic aesthetic sensibilities, and attachment to the region's remarkable scenery. For the next several decades, Bay Tradition architects tried to preserve a kind of cultivated simplicity that, they believed, manifested the best things about the Bay Area. They did so by both accommodating orthodox modernist architecture and tempering it to retain an anti-modern feeling. However, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, their vision did not encapsulate the Bay Area experience as a whole, and this regionalism ultimately did not reign throughout the whole region.

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[1]Kevin F. Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1973), 3.

[2]Starr, 4-48.

[3]Glenna Mathews, "Forging a Cosmopolitan Civic Culture: The Regional Identity of San Francisco and Northern California," in David Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner, eds., *Many Wests* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997).

[4]Starr, 69-109, 365-414.

[5]David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 259.

[6]Whisnant, 13-14, 260.

[7]Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie, 1964), 44.

[8]Dana, 172.

[9]Gerald Haslam, ed., *Many Californians: Literature from the Golden State* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 19.

[10]Atherton, *Golden Gate Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945), 123.

[11]Starr, 3-45.

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[12]Starr, 313.

[13]Leslie Mandelson Freudenheim, *Building with Nature* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), 7.

[14]Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthy Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[15]Brechin, Imperial San Francisco.

[16]Brechin, 270.

[17]Anonymous, "The To-morrow of San Francisco," *Sunset* 2:6 (April 1899), 130.

[18]Charles Keeler, "Municipal Art in American Cities: San Francisco," *The Craftsman* 8:3 (August 1905), 590.

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[20]Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: the Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[21]John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 68-76.

[22]Charles Keeler, *Hillside Club Suggestions for Berkeley Homes* (Berkeley: Arts and Crafts Press, 1999), n.p.

[23]Keeler, *The Craftsman*, 584-593.

[24]Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception* (New York: Current Books, 1949).

[25]Katherine D. Osbourne, *Robert Louis Stevenson in California* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1911), 57.

[26]Glenna Matthews, "Forging a Cosmopolitan Civic Culture: The Regional Identity of San Francisco and Northern California," in David Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner, *Many Wests* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997), 211-34.

[27]R.A. Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish, 1848-1880* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 1-14.

[28]Anonymous, "The Metropolis of the West," *Sunset* 3:2 (June 1899), 62.

[29]Starr, 240.

[30]Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, 1985), 121-137.

[31]Wollenberg, 142.

[32]Wollenberg, 128-133.

[33]Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); Earl S. Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: the Tourist in Western America* (New York: Knopf, 1957).

[34]George Calderwood, *Oakland, "Athens of the Pacific"* (Oakland: G.T. Loofbourow & Company, 1897), 26.

[35]Calderwood, 17.

[36]San Jose Chamber of Commerce, *Santa Clara County, California* (San Jose: Chamber of Commerce, 1905), 2.

[37]Santa Clara County, California, 2.

[38]Leigh Irvine, Santa Clara County, California: California Lands for Wealth, California Fruits for Health (San Jose: Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, 1915), 35.

[39]Helen Bingham, *In Tamal Land* (San Francisco: Calkins, 1906), I.

[40]Bingham, 54-55.

[41]Bingham, 138.

[42]William Woodhead and Charles Field, "Announcement," *Sunset* (September 1914), 504d.

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[43]Cissie Dore Hill, "*Sunset*: A Century of Western Living, 1898-1998," *California History* 78:2 (Summer 1999), 95.

[44]Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 187.

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CHAPTER TWO: "BUILDING NATURALLY: ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA AND THE BAY TRADITION'S BEGINNINGS, 1876-1929"

The Bay Tradition began as a practical response to a lack of building materials, a dearth of professional architects, and a rejection of formality, but it became a recognizable architectural mode by the 1890s. Architects and scholars, both within and outside the region, have long debated the question of whether an actual "Bay Area style" exists. While arguments that it constitutes a coherent style are frequently rebuffed, there is little denying that a distinct set of attitudes toward design has long characterized the San Francisco region's architectural practice, which from the 1890s onward displayed a strong independent streak.

The term, coined by critic Lewis Mumford in *The New Yorker*, inspired a debate brought to the fore by *Architectural Record* in 1949. "Is There a Bay Area Style?" asked several local architects' views and delivered a variety of answers. William Wurster, among the first local architects to fuse the Bay Tradition with the International Style in the 1930s, said it was less a matter of regional style than of "real continuity in strong, lively independent work for more than half a century."[1] Albert Henry Hill claimed that it began as a response to local needs, limitations, and newness: "As the region developed and settled down, some built with honesty and a straightforward sincerity, without preconceived beliefs or prejudices. They simply built for their needs and conditions."[2] Hill overstates this, since Bay Area builders in the late nineteenth century did not wholly start afresh. Most were migrants from the East Coast who freely borrowed and combined existing styles, adapting them to wood's limitations because bricks were much less readily available than redwood in northern California.

Gordon Dailey reiterates these arguments and sums them up tidily, citing the area's diversity, physical remoteness, pleasing scenery and

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climate, the Orient's proximity, and the local independent creative spirit. He says that a local "style" exists because the regional culture mandated it: "By their open minds and tolerance, their fostering of the arts in all forms, their varied origins and vocations, [Bay Area people] made the atmosphere which encouraged an original, creative spirit . . . quite early in the West's history."[3] Whether Bay Tradition is a style or not (and most architects argued the latter), by 1900 the Bay Area's architectural mode revolved around interpretation of materials in the name of taste rather than orthodox style. In addition, local architects took reverence for "nature" a bit further than was conventional in early-twentieth-century American architecture.

In the late nineteenth century, American architects and city planners were part of a larger trend of nature worship. Not only were affluent Americans taking up outdoor recreation in order to remedy the perceived ills of urban life, but many also sought homes in areas which combined the best of both the urban and rural realms. This meant living in well-wooded neighborhoods with winding streets and open space, along with amenities like sanitation and transportation to jobs in city centers. In the decades after the Civil War, "sylvan suburbs" like Frederick Law Olmsted's Riverside (in Illinois) and Grosvenor Atterbury's Forest Hills (in New York) emerged as deliberate responses to rapid urbanization and the problems associated with cities growing too chaotically.[4] San Francisco's affluent suburbs were partly inspired by Olmsted, though this had as much to do with national trends as with a manifestation of local attitudes toward nature that predated the "back to nature" movement and that had an indelible influence on urban form.

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IN THE BAY AREA BEFORE 1900

The architectural scene in and around San Francisco in the late nineteenth century reflected this independent creative spirit to a large

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degree, as well as its distance from the American mainstream, its small size as a professional community, and its early affinity for plain, "honest" building. Also, according to architect Kenneth Cardwell, early Bay Area architects had such diverse origins and training that no hegemony really emerged; local architecture's eclectic qualities were as much circumstantial as planned. Cardwell neatly sums up the situation:

> There was no single strong influence from any one particular area that directed the development of architecture in the Bay Region in the 1890s [or earlier]. The work of the newcomers drew its greatest strength from the mixture of social and aesthetic ideas that abounded in its young heterogeneous practitioners.[5]

In the first two or three decades after the Gold Rush, much building in the Bay Area was done speedily and simply, to answer the urgent demand for structures and with the only material readily available on short notice - wood, redwood in particular. Carpenters and contractors, not architects, filled the void and built plain, conventional structures which served their purpose and paid little attention to fashion. As a result of rapid growth, virtually nonexistent planning, and rapid building, San Francisco very quickly became a rather ugly city in the eyes of some observers, especially newly arrived professional architects, whose numbers steadily increased after 1870.

Willis Polk, Midwestern-born and -trained, was an exceptionally astute and acerbic critic of San Francisco's Gilded Age landscape. He found the city mired in poor, derivative architecture (especially the garish, fashionable High Victorian, Italianate, and Queen Anne style) and considered its architects provincial and out of touch with the principles of tasteful design. He branded San Francisco "an architectural nightmare conceived in a reign of terror and produced by artistic anarchists."[6] His answer to the city's architectural woes was simplicity - not plainness, but cultivated creativity and avoiding garishness and blind imitation. "Simplicity, the prime ruler of all

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artistic work, is an unknown virtue with our modern designers," he complained in 1893.[7]

Polk was not the first Bay Area architect to sing the praises of the simple, unpretentious structure, nor was he the first to root it in the Bay Area. According to Leslie Freudenheim, an anonymous 1882 article in *California Architect and Building News* praised Joseph Worcester's Piedmont home (Figures 2-1 and 2-2) for its "honest shingle roof" and singular lack of pretense, hailing it as uniquely San Franciscan architecture. While Freudenheim makes little of this, it hints at both the East Bay's subordinate relationship to San Francisco and an early notion of what regional architecture should be. However, Polk's admonitions seem to have struck a chord in the nascent architectural community, which announced its maturity and self-consciousness in the early 1890s with the launching of several local professional journals.

California Architect and Building News, founded in San Francisco in 1882, and oriented toward the Bay Area's building community, included among its aims reforming local architecture and educating the public in the guidelines of good taste. In 1896, an unnamed author backed up local professionals' belief that California's builders often ignored architects and built their own way, resulting in unsightly yet quickly- and frequently-replicated cityscapes. "It is impossible any longer to get a living remuneration for the services of an architect," the author laments, calling for the profession to be both more frequently heeded and employed.[8]

This publication also included subtle calls for reform, not only in local building practices but also in architecture as a whole. In April 1897, it re-ran an *Atlantic* article by Henry Van Brunt, a noted Kansas City architect and follower of H. H. Richardson's historicist Romanesque style. While his own work was in its time conventional,

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Figure 2-1 and 2-2. Joseph Worcester house, Piedmont, California, 1876. From Leslie M. Freudenheim, *Building with Nature*.

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often in the High Victorian Gothic style, his sentiments reveal something other than orthodoxy:

> [Architecture] has been an art of experiments which have failed, and of revivals which have been fruitless. [Contemporary architects], with their consciousness highly educated and trained, have been embarrassed rather than aided by their knowledge of the great achievements of the past. It does not seem to have occurred to them to appeal to the sympathies of the people by uttering their inspirations in the vulgar tongue, but they have labored with immense talent and ingenuity to interpret and apply dead languages.[9]

Though this piece was buried near the back of the issue, among advertisements, a list of illustrations, and blurbs about local building news, it makes a clear call for abandoning a dead historicism and creating a new, populist architecture for the coming century. While reactions to it are unknown, it may well have struck a chord locally, since the Bay Area's architects would, in coming years, firmly ground local architecture in the vernacular and produce subsequent modernisms that judiciously applied elements of the past without slavishly adhering to "dead languages."

The Architect and Builder, launched by San Francisco architect H.T. Bestor in 1894, similarly aimed not only to address builders and architects, but also to correct problems in local building and designing practices. For example, one editorial argues that professionals know best how to design (among the chief points of the magazine's very existence):

> The people of San Francisco are very fond of saying that "common sense" should teach us how to protect ourselves, and how to build our houses. How few possess the "uncommon sense" necessary to master the rudiments of the business! Facts, not fancies, must be our guides.[10]

Subsequent editions featured articles proclaiming local architects' sense of mission - not only reclaiming the profession for trained professionals and creating a more aesthetically handsome city, but also teaching the public about good taste, so that architecture would not

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remain a subject solely for the elite. In 1894, an anonymous contributor claimed:

> One of the most serious consequences of the too widely existent apathy of the people at large to architecture as a thing "out of their line," is that ignorant charlatans often impose on them, and urge them into the building of that which is tasteless and extravagant by assuming the name of "architect," without any real knowledge of the rules of art, or the fundamental principles which govern it.[11]

Indeed, Bay Area architects' complaints about the state of architecture and their efforts to promote good architectural taste did not occur in a void. Some contemporary architectural historians consider Gilded Age architecture an abomination, the lamentable product of abundant new money, vast energy, and wild experimentation with historical forms. Scholars tend to be somewhat tolerant of this practice; Leland Roth maintains that, if nothing else, this era of "brash parvenu taste . . . [boasted] a particular intensity of exploration of many new possibilities in structure and in various modes of building," while Wayne Andrews states pithily: "Pageants have their place, and Americans without a palace would be as poor a thing as a parade without a banner."[12]

Gaudy, decorative, historicist designs were popular in the four decades before 1910, and northern California had its share of these. An example is the Carson House in Eureka, completed in 1886 and designed by the Newsom Brothers, Samuel and Joseph, who built numerous Italianate homes in San Francisco and northern California (Figure 2-3). An imposing Italianate mansion built on Eureka's harbor for shipping magnate William Carson, it is laden with applied wooden ornamentation, steeply pitched roofs, and a large central tower, giving it a scale and presence that make it one of the best-known Italianates in California.

However, some architects, like Willis Polk, found such buildings offensive and railed against them in print, hoping that they could sway the public against such design and reshape public taste. Polk's

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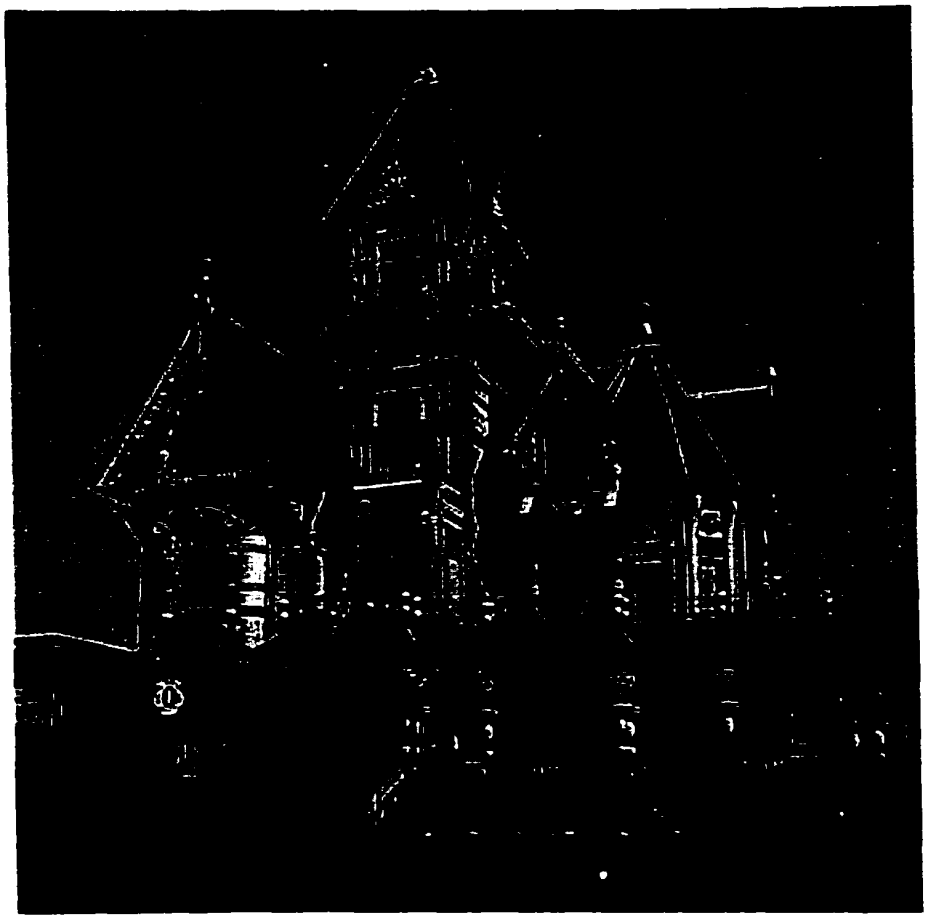

Figure 2-3. Samuel and Joseph C. Newsom, William Carson house, Eureka, California, 1886. From website http://www.well.com.

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writings in *The Wave*, a San Francisco-based art and humor magazine, railed in often biting terms against the ugliness of dominant American styles, especially the High Victorian Gothic favored by John Ruskin's followers. In 1895, *California Architect and Building News* praised the creation of an architecture department at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art (now the San Francisco Art Institute), where Bernard Maybeck briefly taught, in hopes that it would yield better architecture for the city. In that same year it campaigned for the passage of a state bill requiring professional standards of all practicing architects. The measure failed, the magazine bitterly claimed: ". . . due to a man who made plans, dealt in lumber, second-hand bricks, real estate, rags, bottles, sacks, etc. We think the cause of its defeat may have been over-stated, but it seems reasonable to suppose that some person of like caliber should have been its opponent."[13]

Bay Area architects before 1920 were generally still rooted in tradition, but they did not slavishly adhere to any particular paradigm. For the most part, they followed the rubric Joseph Baird discusses in *Time's Wondrous Changes*, derived from the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, using the Romanesque and Baroque styles for public buildings, Gothic for churches, and Classical for banks. San Francisco architecture had a "conservative dignity," yet an undercurrent of regional eclecticism mitigated this fact. In less humble structures, says Baird, less mainstream influences were at work:

> Between 1894 and 1915 [the 1893 World's Fair's] ideas infiltrated the San Francisco scene, deeply influencing the work of Maybeck, Polk, Arthur Brown, and others. At the same time, humbler domestic and commercial building was not forgotten, and a proto "Bay Area architecture," anticipating Wurster and others in more recent time, was evolving in Berkeley and in parts of San Francisco. The great houses of the rich were generally period essays. . . .[14]

While the last statement is perhaps true, other tastes were germinating among the middle and upper-middle classes, Arts and Crafts

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in particular. Indeed, it was not the very richest who spawned and kept alive the Bay Tradition, but the middle classes, including the residents of northeast Berkeley who formed the Hillside Club. Their civic-mindedness, responsiveness to architects' opinions of taste, and less formal approach to homebuilding all combined to help the Bay Tradition flourish.

WILLIS POLK: ACADEMIC ECLECTICISM

The first Bay Tradition architects seem to have followed Van Brunt's advice years before he delivered it. They can be accurately described as "liberal historicists," meaning that they freely interpreted elements of past styles while also incorporating elements of the vernacular. They also focused on correcting what they considered the gaudiness and poor taste of San Francisco's pre-1910 architecture, by putting well-designed, eclectic renderings of existing styles ahead of creating any new doctrines or paradigms. The Bay Tradition's earliest proponents interpreted and expressed "simplicity" differently than did post-Bauhaus modernists. While the latter believed it meant a lack of ornamentation, the former interpreted it as restraint, unity of design, and "dignity," in contrast to the ostentatious High Victorian and Italianate architecture then rampant in northern California.

Willis Polk (1867-1924) was among the first Bay Area architects to cast a critical light on local architecture and to approach his work as a remedy for urban ugliness and garishness. Trained as a carpenter in his native Illinois, he lacked formal architectural training but nonetheless had a keen eye for design, a refined sense of taste, and an incisive, often acerbic wit (with which he freely criticized and insulted his peers). Lacking formal education, he also lacked any strong architectural doctrines beyond a sense of good design - which he found in short supply in San Francisco. His ideal cityscape was a

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varied mixture of rustic and urban, a "cultivated rusticity," as he saw it.[15] While he searched for his own style as a draftsman under A. Page Brown, he did not intend to create a distinct Bay Area idiom. He rejected provincial insularity and regionalism, preferring an eclectic rendering of established styles, such as Beaux-Arts and Arts and Crafts, albeit in local materials like redwood.

In his career, from 1890 to his death in 1924, Polk adhered faithfully to the tenets of academic historicism, using diverse historical design elements but moderating their extremes. What distinguished Polk from his contemporaries is his sense of taste and balance; the dense, polychromatic ornamentation found in High Victorian and Beaux-Arts neoclassical designs is moderated and dignified rather than exuberant and overstated. His most numerous works were mansions built for rich clients in San Francisco and down the San Mateo peninsula. Most noted among these are his own 1892 home in San Francisco (Figure 2-4), a large shingle-style duplex on Russian Hill, and "Filoli" in Woodside (Figure 2-5), a Renaissance- and Spanish Colonial-influenced mansion built in 1917 for the mine-owning Bourn family. Both attest to Polk's carefully measured use of ornament, appreciation for historical styles, and understated designs.

As well-known as he was for designing attractive homes, Polk's favorite work was Sunol's Water Temple (Figure 2-6), built in 1910. A small, open-air temple with a round, red-tiled roof supported by Grecian columns, it sits in an Arcadian setting on the edge of a farming community roughly forty miles from San Francisco. It qualifies as a Bay Tradition landmark not only because Polk designed it, but because it embodies the idiom's traits. Its romantic setting and effect are carefully calculated, and though it evokes the pastoral, it is part of an urban infrastructure, the site of a filtering station along the

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Figure 2-4. Willis Polk, Williams=Polk house, San Francisco, 1892.

Figure 2-5. Willis Polk, Bourn mansion ("Filoli"), Woodside, California, 1917. Both from website http://www.willispolk.com.

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Figure 2-6. Willis Polk, Sunol Water Temple, Sunol, California, 1910. From website http://www.willispolk.com.

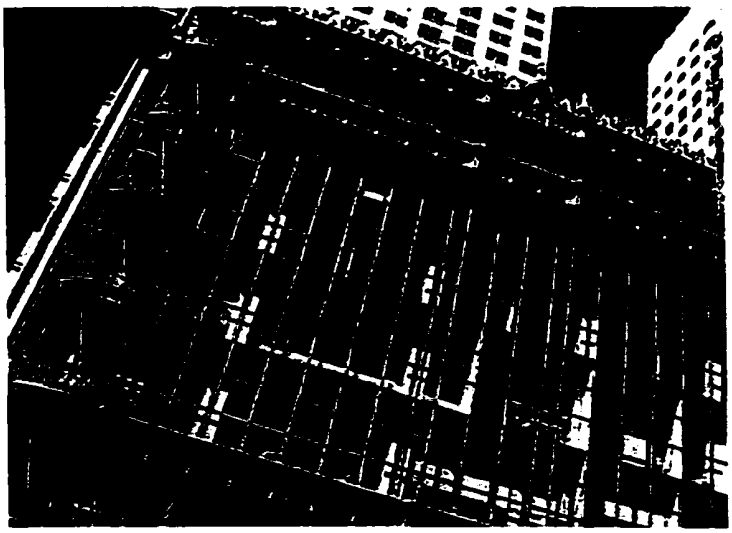

Figure 2-7. Willis Polk, Hallidie Building, San Francisco, 1917. From website http://www.mistersf.com.

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waterway between the Hetch Hetchy Valley and the Crystal Springs Reservoir, the source of San Francisco's water supply.

Like later Bay Area architects, he was not averse to the machine aesthetic later made famous by Germany's Bauhaus school. His Hallidie Building in San Francisco (Figure 2-7), completed in 1918, is a glass-curtained office building with a simple rectilinear form and modest iron ornamentation; the latter element aside, the building anticipates Mies by more than two decades. Though he helped spawn the notion of rustic urban homes, Polk lost interest in this idiom and his work became more conventional throughout the 1910s. As a result (and because he habitually alienated his colleagues and friends), Polk's practice dwindled and his importance diminished before his death.[16]

THE CRAFTSMAN STYLE AS SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Another element that made Willis Polk obsolete was the emergence of the Arts and Crafts movement, and its popularity in the Bay Area between 1890 and the 1920s. Arts and Crafts was more than simply a style; it was a full-fledged social movement, because it not only had considerable aesthetic influence but also assumed social and political rnetoric and goals. Created in Britain by William Morris and derived from John Ruskin's art criticism, it held the craftsmen of past centuries in high esteem yet was clearly a form of modernism, since it directly addresses what Morris considered the ugliness and soulless character of the industrial age.

As T. J. Jackson Lears claims in *No Place of Grace*, "many beneficiaries of modern culture began to feel that they were its secret victims." Despite the affluent classes' desires for material progress, some began feeling uncomfortable and ambivalent about the ways in which capitalism was reshaping their lives. Lears characterizes this as a "yearning for authentic experience - physical, emotional, or spiritual."

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The over-civilization accompanying material progress, science, and technology "had promoted a spreading sense of moral impotence and spiritual sterility - a feeling that life had become not only civilized but also curiously unreal."[17] Basically, fear of over-civilization and a growing disdain for bureaucratic, corporate work fed desires for simple living and a widespread enthusiasm for handicraft, helping feed a growing trend of anti-modernism in the United States.

The anti-modernism Lears describes is not anathema to modernity, but is a condition of it, countering its perceived excesses with intense, unrefined, unambiguous experiences that seem more "real" than the modern urban experience, which he (like cultural theorist Marshall Berman) characterizes as "weightless" and fraught with ambiguities.[18] Anti-modernism was rooted in the authenticity of physical work and contact with nature, which industrial society seemed to be eclipsing. Lears cites an 1888 article which cautions: "Once let the human race be cut off from personal contact with the soil, once let the conventionalities and artificial restrictions of so-called civilization interfere with the healthful simplicity of nature, and decay is certain."[19]

On a similar note, Miles Orvell explains this anxiety as a kind of ambiguity toward the machine age:

> [The] more the world was filled with machine-age things, the more questions were generated regarding the impact of the new technologies on daily life and work: would the machine, for example, support traditional values, or utterly destroy them? . . . Would its powers of fabrication be used to transform raw materials into simulacra of foreign cultures, or would a form of expression develop that would be representative of indigenous American culture - assuming there was such a thing?[20]

Such worries helped make the Arts and Crafts style popular, especially Gustav Stickley's Craftsman furniture, which seemed to counteract the machine's pernicious influence. In addition, Arts and Crafts' popularity was furthered by Americans' desire in the late

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nineteenth century for aesthetic simplicity and material authenticity. David Shi argues that the "simple living" movement is a long-standing set of shifting ideas which manifested in response to the perceived ugliness and superficiality of modern life. In addition, it embraced several contradictory traits:

> A hostility toward luxury and a suspicion of life and work [sic], a reverence for nature and a preference for rural over urban ways of life and work . . . a nostalgia for the past and a skepticism toward the claims of modernity, conscientious rather than conspicuous consumption, and an aesthetic taste for the plain and functional.[21]

Arts and Crafts, says Shi, answered a need among the affluent classes for simpler goods, which gave at least the sense of living more simply and tastefully.

Gustav Stickley, a furniture designer and manufacturer near Syracuse, New York, discovered Morris' ideas around 1890, after they were already popular in the urban Northeast. Stickley gave the movement a reform impulse, aiming "to substitute the luxury of taste for the luxury of costliness; to teach that beauty does not imply elaboration or ornament; to employ only those forms and materials which make for simplicity, individuality, and dignity of effect."[22] Much in the way Joseph Worcester viewed his original Piedmont house, Stickley considered Arts and Crafts "moral" and founded *The Craftsman* magazine as both a means of selling his furniture and as a way to spread his gospel. Peaking at 60,000 readers in 1909, *The Craftsman* was published from 1901 to 1916 (when Stickley went bankrupt) and helped spread a taste for simple homes, furniture, and decor among its largely urban, affluent readers.

According to historian Barry Sanders, the Arts and Crafts movement replied to industrial society by claiming that it degraded labor and let ugliness proliferate in home decor and urban landscapes alike.[23] Geographer J.B. Jackson concurs, claiming that the movement "reflected a

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fateful change . . . in our attitude toward the meaning of work" and protested against the negative aspects of industrial civilization.[24] Also, it argued that modern urbanites needed to surround themselves with simple aesthetic beauty (such as hand-crafted artwork and furniture) to better balance their lives. However, like the "back to nature" movement Peter Schmitt describes,[25] it was self-consciously simple and catered largely to a middle- and upper-middle-class core of followers, and its chief American apostle was firmly entrenched in modern capitalism. In addition, it was too pricey for workers; David Shi underscores this contradiction, claiming that "a movement ostensibly intended to elevate the labors of the working class and the taste of the middle class could not depend on handcrafted objects available only to the well-to-do."[26]

Contradictions aside, Arts and Crafts struck a deep chord in the Bay Area, where it had numerous influential followers who saw in California's past several key elements of the "folk" culture the movement embraced. Says Richard Longstreth, "The Arts and Crafts Movement's concern for rustic simplicity, utilitarian value, and at least certain trappings of preindustrial society reinforced the sentiment toward the region's natural landscape and California's pioneer heritage."[27] For Bay Area architects, this included the Spanish missions and California's barns, both of which were often-handsome structures built without the aid of architects and which spoke of "folk" cultures.[28]

It also appealed to local attitudes toward nature, which were well developed before 1900. The movement's designs, according to art scholar Kenneth Trapp, were as well received in the Bay Area as they were in the Northeast, but northern California's local variant differed both in degree and application, due to the Bay Area's existing bond with the physical environment:

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> California's reception of the Arts and Crafts movement was . . . more than merely a cordial adoption of an eastern gospel. . . . What distinguishes [it] from the movement elsewhere in the United States is the special bond that Californians had with nature. . . . Californians were never far from the wild. Builders, architects, and garden designers often took the land into account by incorporating nature into the daily living experience.[29]

Longstreth argues that the "nature craze" that spread across America around 1900 took root in northern California much earlier - specifically, in the 1860s, when well-off Bay Area denizens began vacationing in the Coast Range and Sierra Nevada foothills. He claims:

> Infatuation with the wilderness was by no means limited to the Bay Area, but the degree to which its residents came to identify with the rustic landscape was probably not matched in other metropolitan regions. . . . Once the [Bay Area's hilly] terrain came to be widely appreciated among residents, it was embraced with a passion.[30]

For all of this, though, especially its claims to reform, Arts and Crafts never attained much political clout. Its contemporary, the Progressive movement, did not take its aesthetic mandates into account when civic leaders throughout the United States rebuilt urban centers on the Beaux-Arts model. Also, says Lears, Arts and Crafts was too ambivalent toward socioeconomic conditions to be truly effective; it was "meanspirited and largehearted, suffused with upper-class forebodings and utopian aspirations," and was primarily an elite sentiment.[31] While it claimed that industrial life was numbing and dehumanizing, it also lacked the deeper human concerns necessary for effective reform. Its members embraced Progressivism, but they also wanted continued economic growth and overlooked working people's problems in the process.

Though critical of capitalist work, Arts and Crafts' followers had little quarrel with capitalism per se. Many of the movement's figures were capitalists with little regard for workers' poor living and working conditions (Stickley among them), and they mistrusted both union labor and the immigrant workers who often comprised it. Lears claims that Arts and Crafts ideas, when applied to education, were classist,

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socially deterministic, and devoid of substantial changes to society or culture:

> [Arts and Crafts education amounted to] assembly line preparation for the lower classes and educational or recreational experiences for the bourgeoisie; in neither case did it challenge the separation of productive labor from joyful labor, nor protest the modern organization of work. Instead, it eased adjustment to our twentieth-century world of organized capitalism. . . .[32]

Basically, Arts and Crafts came to mean social control for the poor and condoned individualism for the more affluent. Similarly, Bay Tradition architecture was created primarily by and for the middle and upper-middle classes; for the Bay Area's lower classes, the Bay Tradition had only minimal significance. In San Francisco, many lived either in apartments or densely packed Victorian homes, usually built in the Italianate style before 1900. Across the bay in Oakland and Berkeley, working-class families inhabited bungalows, which, while owing their origins to the Arts and Crafts movement, were generally plain, mass-produced stucco boxes that lacked the rich attention to detail and materials that homes for the affluent could boast. While the Arts and Crafts style is best manifested in Pasadena's Gamble House, designed in 1909 by the Greene brothers (Figure 2-8), workers' bungalows were quickly and cheaply built, often without the scale or rich use of materials that the Greenes and other architects could give to elite homes.

BERKELEY: MAYBECK, KEELER, AND THE HILLSIDE CLUB

In the Bay Area, Arts and Crafts ideals generally had little political impact, since the movement never attracted mass working-class support. Their rather limited effect, though, manifested most clearly in Berkeley's affluent hillside neighborhoods, which Kevin Starr characterizes as an experimental urban utopia created by a small core of residents who had considerable influence in city politics and the desire

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Figure 2-8. Greene and Greene, Gamble house, Pasadena, California, 1909. From website http://www.gamblehouse.org.

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to keep some kind of sylvan ambience in the midst of urban development.[33]

Turn-of-the-century Berkeley was the first community to embrace the Bay Tradition on a large scale. As a sparsely settled university town, it both fostered an intellectual community and had room for such an experiment to occur. Also, it had a significant number of affluent residents on its hilly east side, which set itself apart socially and visually from the mainly working-class industrial flatlands to the west, along the shore of San Pablo Bay.

The city of Berkeley began piecemeal, as did Oakland, its larger neighbor to the south. Both cities consisted of small communities that merged into larger cities as their pieces expanded and blended. In the 1850s and '60s, Berkeley was composed of Ocean View, near the bay, and the community growing around the then-new University of California. Northeast Berkeley, the domain of the Hillside Club, was settled in 1859 by the Byrne family from Missouri, whose 877-acre estate along Codornices Creek was quickly subdivided. With the extension of a Southern Pacific streetcar line to the corner of Vine Street and Shattuck Avenue in 1878, it quickly became a "streetcar suburb" and assumed its social fabric early:

> In contrast to predominantly immigrant [and blue-collar] Ocean View, half of the early residents [of northeastern Berkeley] were native-born. The neighborhood was also characterized by a high percentage of upper-class and middle-class residents who frequently commuted San Francisco for their employment.[34]

The neighborhood did not lose this character even as development increased and after Southern Pacific extended a "Key System" line (Figure 2-9) farther up both Shattuck and Vine in 1911.[35]

By 1900, Berkeley had become a relatively diverse community, both demographically and visually. Its industrial west side was home to various ethnic groups (Portuguese, Mexicans, Italians, and a growing number of blacks) who often fished or worked in the nearby foundries,

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Figure 2-9. May of Key System routes in Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, and Richmond, 1911. From website http://www.sunsite.berkeley.edu.

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tanneries, and railroad facility. East of Berkeley's centrally located downtown, though, the incomes and percentage of native-born whites rose with the terrain. This latter community not only dominated Berkeley politically, but also aimed to shape the town physically as well, emphasizing its anti-urban qualities even as it steadily grew.

Berkeley's promotional literature of the time clearly aims at the kind of people who already lived in its hills, and illustrates what shape they wanted to community to retain. *Berkeley, California: A City of Homes*, a 1905 tract produced by the Conference Committee of Improvement Clubs, is a glossy piece aimed at homebuyers. It emphasizes the same things the Hillside Club and other proponents of the Bay Tradition did - a non-urban ambience with the "right" kind of people and modern amenities close by. The work stresses the university's presence and the proximity of Oakland and San Francisco. As with other Bay Area communities, the place's physical attractions figured foremost:

> It lies on a sloping plain and on picturesque hill-sides - a site matchless for beauty of prospect, for healthfulness of climate, for sanitary situation, for accessibility to metropolitan life, for educational advantages, for moral and religious environment, for all that goes to make up the perfection of home conditions.[36]

This short book emphasizes the same things that Bay Tradition would, appealing to an existing community of well-heeled people who aimed to construct the Bay Area on their sensibilities.

In this milieu, architect Bernard Maybeck and poet/naturalist Charles Keeler formed a partnership that shaped both the urban landscape of the Berkeley hills and the first large-scale manifestation of Bay Tradition architecture and urban development. Born in Milwaukee in 1871, and raised in San Francisco, Keeler was something of a dilettante, by turns a teacher, poet, natural scientist, and author, publishing his first work, *Evolution Of The Colors Of North American Land Birds*, at age 22 in 1893.[37]

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Six years after forming his partnership with Maybeck in the Hillside Club, Keeler published its manifesto, *The Simple Home*, an Arts and Crafts-influenced piece extolling the virtues of simple living and "honest" design. Though Keeler enthusiastically followed both William Morris' and Gustav Stickley's ideals, he was not simply an idealistic critic of industrial urban life; if anything, his views represented those of the Bay Tradition itself. He was pro-science (a trained ornithologist, in fact), and he had no quarrel with the machine per se, as long as it was used for utilitarian reasons and displayed aesthetic simplicity. However, he considered Queen Anne architecture the lamentable result of the machine age, since it both produced ugliness and was irrelevant to how people lived.[38]

In his introduction, Keeler explains the value of the simple dwelling in terms of truthfulness to nature and how life was most happily lived. Its Arts and Crafts roots are obvious:

> All the arts are modes of experiencing the One Ideal; but the ideal must be rooted in the soil of the real, the practical, the utilitarian. . . . Thus it happens that architecture, the most utilitarian of the arts, underlies all other expressions of the ideal; and of all architecture, the designing of the home brings the artist into closest touch with the life of man.[39]

As he goes on to illustrate, Keeler advocates simple homes because they are outgrowths of nature. The ostentatious, conventional Victorian homes then in style (Queen Annes in particular) were to him aberrant, ugly, unnatural, wasteful, and unsuited to family life, since they promoted false values. With no small amount of aesthetic snobbery, he thought that ugly houses made ugly people:

> Most of us are mollusks after all, and are shaped and sized by the walls which we build around us. When we enter a room and see tawdry furniture, sham ornaments and vulgar daubs of pictures displayed, do we not feel convinced that the occupants of the home have a tawdry and vulgar streak in their natures? Or if all is cold and formal in architecture and furnishings, do we not instinctively nerve ourselves to meet the shock of a politely proper reception?[40]

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In subsequent chapters, Keeler expressed the Arts and Crafts reform impulse with some degree of cultural snobbishness but also with a degree of community awareness that the movement as a whole failed to develop, since he believed in building an entire community along Arts and Crafts lines. He revealed the Bay Tradition's mindset toward cities in general - not anti-urban, but anti-urban ugliness. Keeler found such unsightliness unnecessary, not inherent to urban form. In particular, he argued that urban landscapes needed gardens and that extensive planting attested to "enlightened public sentiment."[41]

Keeler also rejects commercialism and embraces a curious kind of regionalism that openly embraces a cosmopolitan view. Rather than having local culture exclude outside elements and essentialize the place, Keeler argues that regionalism is a core of ideas and ways of interpreting, rather than a set of products. Indeed, just as Keeler's aesthetic philosophies ranged beyond the strictly provincial, the Bay Tradition was not restricted to local practices and products. Keeler summed it up neatly by claiming, "[Local art and architecture's] principles may have been imported from afar, but the application of those principles must be native."[42]

In the early 1890s, as Keeler was coming into his own as a naturalist and author, his friend Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957) was coming of age as an architect. The most pivotal figure in the Bay Tradition's early phase, Maybeck was, like his peers, a formally trained newcomer to the Bay Area. More of a maverick than most, Maybeck was among the most prolific and influential Bay Tradition practitioners, completing over 150 structures during his sixty-year career.[43] Born in New York City, the son of a German immigrant cabinetmaker, Maybeck was raised in Greenwich Village and schooled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, as were many more conventional American architects. Finishing his education there without a diploma (he was admitted before foreign

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students were allowed to graduate formally), Maybeck worked as a draftsman in New York and Kansas City before moving to San Francisco in 1890, at Willis Polk's urging. Briefly a draftsman for established Beaux-Arts architect A. Page Brown, Maybeck struck out on his own in 1892.

The architectural scene Maybeck entered was then in flux, and he and some of his peers, like Polk, represented a coming vanguard of change. As Maybeck scholar Kenneth Cardwell claims:

> For many years the profession remained divided between established practitioners [most of whom had arrived by 1870] and "newcomers" whose number had been increasing since the completion of the transcontinental railroad. . . . Not always to the liking of the established architects, young newcomers began to leave their mark on the city's architecture.[44]

For Maybeck and other Bay Tradition originators, the building of Joseph Worcester's Church of the New Jerusalem in 1894 was an epiphany of sorts, giving these like-minded designers extensive practical exposure to the Arts and Crafts principles to which Worcester adhered. From this date onward, Maybeck fused Arts and Crafts elements with the eclectic historicism he learned at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (and to which Polk and Coxhead were more firmly devoted), and used the Berkeley hills as his laboratory.

After teaching at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art and the University of California (where Julia Morgan, designer of Hearst Castle, was one of his students), Maybeck practiced independently and experimented freely with a variety of styles, among them Gothic, Arts and Crafts, Mission revival, Tudor, and shingle. Always, he preferred to work in unpainted wood. This woodsy quality was the reigning constant of his designs, whether homes or public structures, like the original Hearst Hall on the university campus (Figure 2-10), and the Town and Gown Club a few blocks to the south. He preferred wood not only because of its abundance, but because, as a casual adherent to Arts

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and Crafts ideology, he believed its use expressed a key "truth" about the Bay Area: using native materials grounded a building more firmly in its region and thus represented a sort of cultural authenticity. Also, the Arts and Crafts movement's local popularity made redwood homes more desirable to his clients. In addition, it reflected his background as a woodworker's son:

> Feeling that wood was the logical material with which to build houses in California, Maybeck used it in systems that emphasized its natural qualities. He considered himself a modern artisan at work with products of the machine age, and when he exposed framing members for the ornamental value of their repetitive rhythms, he drew inspiration from the construction of medieval craftsmen.[45]

For all of this, though, Maybeck was never a wholly orthodox believer in Arts and Crafts, as was his friend Keeler. Instead, like Willis Polk, he chose his design elements rather selectively, exclusively subscribing to none. Also, as a lifelong urbanite (growing up in lower Manhattan and later living in both Oakland and Berkeley), Maybeck did not necessarily sing the praises of rustic living. Though he enjoyed the outdoors (he camped avidly and belonged to the Bohemian Club), he did not romanticize the past in his works or imply nature-worship:

> Maybeck started his designs on premises more sophisticated than those attributed to the Arts and Crafts movement. Exploitation of structural order, application of visual phenomena, and respect for new materials and industrial processes, as well as a firm belief in the expressive qualities of form were the bases for his work. . . . The fact that Maybeck was ready either to adopt historic forms or to explore the boundaries of current construction technology went unnoticed by others advocating nature-inspired ornament or the infusion of handcrafts into the building process.[46]

Maybeck represented a kind of modernism that predated the Bauhaus and did not, like that strain, reject the natural world or fetishize the machine. Maybeck relied on the past for many of his designs and ornamentation and shared with the latter a distaste for gaudiness. His

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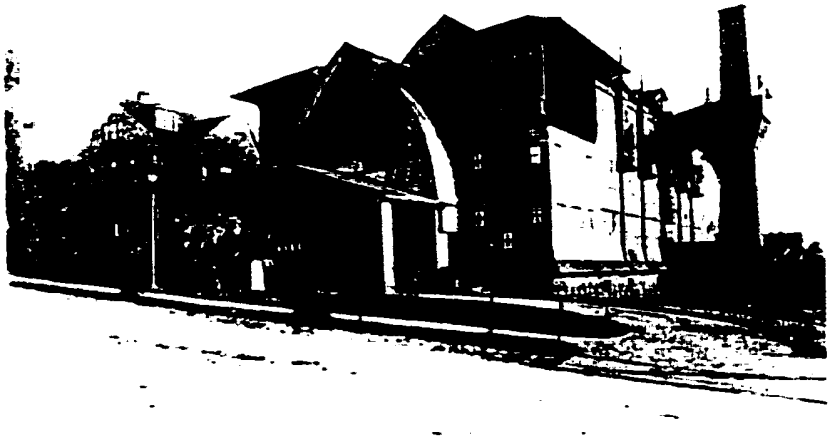

Figure 2-10. Bernard Maybeck, Hearst Hall, Berkeley, 1899-1902. From website http://www.sunsite.berkeley.edu.

Figure 2-11. Bernard Maybeck, Charles Keeler house, Berkeley, 1895. From website http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Orchard/8642.

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sense of aesthetic propriety more closely reflected academic eclectics like Polk and Coxhead.

In 1895, Maybeck designed a shingled home for Keeler (Figure 2-11), which resembled Joseph Worcester's simple Piedmont home, only a larger scale. Soon afterward, Maybeck built his own house nearby, only a block northeast of the University of California campus in Berkeley, and became known among the town's academic and professional circles. His reputation spread, no doubt helped by his friendship with Keeler, his occasional teaching post at the university, and his membership in the Hillside Club. Between 1895 and 1928, exactly forty of Maybeck's home designs were built in Berkeley, mainly in the area north and northeast of campus where he and his family lived.[47]

MAYBECK AND THE BAY TRADITION

In Bernard Maybeck, the first stage of the Bay Tradition finds its defining figure, who best combined the conventional architectural styles of the early twentieth century with the local sensibilities that defined the Bay Tradition. His designs attest to the eclectic nature of his training, mixing elements of Gothic, Swiss chalet, Stick Style, and Tudor; but always the constant is the generous use of native wood, which helps ground his works in the Bay Area.

Examples of his work reveal his broad tastes and willingness to play with styles which adhering to none. Keeler's house drew heavily from the vertical, narrow Gothic style, with elements borrowed from medieval German architecture. The Mathewson house, built in 1915 (Figure 2-12), consists of two pavilions with gently sloping roofs and large bands of windows extending from about waist height to the

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Figure 2-12. Bernard Maybeck, Mathewson house, Berkeley, 1915. From Kenneth Cardwell, *Maybeck*.

Figure 2-13. Bernard Maybeck, First Church of Christ, Scientist, Berkeley, 1910. From website http://www.maybeck.org.

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ceilings. Unobtrusively occupying a thickly wooded urban lot, it seems to grow out of its lushly planted site, giving it an organic feel. Like his other homes, neither of these rigidly adheres to the tenets of any specific style; they borrow freely and casually from many and reflect a cosmopolitan awareness of conventional styles, yet also declare a kind of independence by following none rigidly. In addition, they tend to fit well into their well-landscaped settings, aiming for the kind of "organic" appearance Frank Lloyd Wright proclaimed in his Midwestern Prairie homes. Their lack of formality and relatively intimate scale makes these homes feel somewhat like neoclassical cabins - outdoor-oriented and slightly rough-hewn, albeit without discomfort.

Maybeck's masterwork, the First Church of Christ, Scientist (Figure 2-13), built in 1910 a few blocks south of the university, is a wildly eclectic mixture of established idioms. Though it includes a variety of divergent elements - a Greek cruciform plan, Tudor woodwork, large steel-sashed industrial windows, Gothic piers and interior supports, pavilion-like hipped roofs vaguely resembling Japanese vernacular architecture, and a combination of concrete and redwood walls - Maybeck tried to evoke the Middle Ages. His sense of fancy let him imagine himself transported to other eras, and in this case, he claimed he sought to "put himself in the boots of a fellow in the twelfth century."[48] Unlike the eclecticism of the era, though, this structure is not gaudy and overstated but subdued, in part by the building's "natural" color scheme (gray and various brown wood tones). Also, it is partly obscured by mature trees and bushes, and the scale is rather intimate (the building is only a single story and occupies a somewhat narrow city lot). Though located in what was even then a busy, crowded area of eastern Berkeley, it evokes the anti-urban through its use of materials and its unconventional appearance.

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The work that Maybeck and the Hillside Club did in northeast Berkeley did not go unnoticed outside the Bay Area. In a *Scribner's* article from 1912, author Elmer Grey commented on now the West Coast reinvented the suburb and considered them better built than those elsewhere in America. Heaping praise on the region and anticipating the mindset that John Findlay explored eighty years later in *Magic Lands*, Grey wrote:

> The East has been an experimental station for the West in the matter of suburb planning; and this is fortunate. For it would have been a pity to mar the beauty of some of the most beautiful scenery in the world by the introduction of roads and houses in a hap-hazard manner. Some of the natural advantages of the West have been desecrated, but enough have been appreciated and so well treated as to shine as glowing examples of what nature when combined with intelligent art can accomplish.[49]

Grey maintained that the West's suburban landscapes had improved on their counterparts back East, thanks to their inclusion and treatment of the natural surroundings, and in particular he cited the Berkeley hills as a noteworthy example of this:

> Claremont, North Berkeley, Northbrae, and Thousand Oaks are some of the most attractive sections. A peculiar characteristic of the entire district lies in the fact that, although the building restrictions are quite low [perhaps an allusion to the Hillside Club's embrace of eclectic, informal architecture], the class of houses, both as to cost and beauty of design, is much higher. Whether the influence of the University of California is responsible for this or not is hard to say, but it gives Berkeley the distinction of being one place near San Francisco, where those of modest means live in an accessible spot, amidst beautiful surroundings, and in the best of architectural company.[50]

Even by 1912, Maybeck and the Hillside Club had an obvious effect on the Berkeley hills. In less than a decade, they created a distinctive suburban landscape that, in its inclusion of the natural surroundings, had not only become markedly different from those elsewhere, but also typified what a West Coast suburb should be.

What makes Maybeck's work part of the Bay Tradition is its casual mixture of styles and sensitivity to site. His sense of place was contingent upon appropriate materials and creating a visual mood rather

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than a definable style. More often than not, Maybeck used wood in lieu of other materials less out of necessity than out of his sense of "honesty," making his buildings fit what he considered their regional context without dominating their settings. He aimed to express not only regional sensibilities but also his own personality as an artist. Early in his career, Maybeck explained:

> Any architectural composition however simple requires months and even years of thought. This is because a construction must not only express something of the personality of the composer but must be an exponent of the sentiment of the era and people among whom he has developed, so that to one who should see it a thousand years later it would portray in some measure a phase of life existing at the time of construction.[51]

Maybeck's importance in the Bay Tradition comes from his understanding and usage of materials, his sense of the scenic and romantic (which he found in abundance in Berkeley), and his cosmopolitan outlook, which dictated his free use of stylistic elements. Subsequent architects followed in this vein, except that they did not affect Maybeck's attitude toward historicism.

By 1930, the International Style was gaining popularity in the United States, and Bay Area architects approached it with varying degrees of acceptance. Though this new paradigm, created in central Europe and often tinged with leftist ideology, was advertently anti-regional and anti-historicist, architects of the Bay Tradition approached it on their terms, much as they had historicism. Following precedents set by Maybeck and his peers, Bay Area architects adopted orthodox modernism not dogmatically, but as another style which they freely interpreted, and to which they applied their sense of regional uniqueness. While the Bay Tradition's first phase saw its architects play with established styles and make them both more casual and less gaudy, architects of its second phase aimed to create an intimate kind of modernism.

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[1]Anonymous, "Is There a Bay Area Style?", *Architectural Record* 105:5 (May 1949), 92.
[2]Anonymous, "Is There a Bay Area Style?", 93.
[3]Anonymous, "Is There a Bay Area Style?", 94.
[4]Stilgoe, 43-48, 129-161.
[5]Kenneth Cardwell, *Bernard Maybeck: Artisan, Architect, Artist* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1977), 35.
[6]Richard Longstreth, ed., *A Matter of Taste* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1979), 17.
[7]Longstreth, *A Matter of Taste*, 36.
[8]Anonymous, "Ugly Building," *California Architect and Building News* 17:8 (August 1896), 86.
[9]Henry Van Brunt, "Architecture of the Nineteenth Century," *California Architect and Building News* 18:4 (April 1897), 46.
[10]H.T. Bestor, "Healthy versus Unhealthy Houses," *The Architect and Builder* 1:2 (February 1894), 14.
[11]Anonymous, "Architecture and the Public," *The Architect and Builder* 1:5 (May 1894), 57.
[12]Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979) 126; Wayne Andrews, *Architecture, Ambition, and Americans* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 196.
[13]Anonymous, "A Needed Law," *The Architect and Builder* 2:8 (August 1895), 123.
[14]Joseph A. Baird, Jr., Time's Wondrous Changes (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1962), 43.
[15]Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1983), 11.
[16]Longstreth, 301-304.
[17]T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), xiii, xvii, 4-5.
[18]Lears, 6.
[19]Woods Hutchinson, "The Physical Basis of Brain-Work," *North American Review* 146 (May 1888), 522-531; in Lears, 28.
[20]Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 158.
[21]David Shi, *The Simple Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3.
[22]Barry Sanders, *A Complex Fate* (New York: John Wiley, 1996), 28.
[23]Sanders, 3-10.
[24]J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yake University Press, 1984), 115.
[25]Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), xv-xviii, 180.
[26]Shi, 193.
[27]Longstreth, On the Edge of the World, 310.
[28]The missions, however, had their own popular revival from the 1910s through the 1930s, spearheaded in part by Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona*, which was set in southern California. No counterpart phenomenon took place in the Bay Area, and while the mission revival style was evident in the Bay Area, it lacked local architectural hegemony because the Bay Tradition emerged earlier and its practitioners were less taken with the mission style.
[29]Kenneth Trapp, ed., *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California* (Oakland: Oakland Museum, 1993), 9-10.
[30]Longstreth, On the Edge of the World, 111.
[31]Lears, 60, 313.

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[32]Lears, 83.
[33]Starr, 288.
[34]Marguerite Carleton Hussey and Louis Stein, Jr., *Recollections of Life in Northeast Berkeley, 1859-1910* (Berkeley: Berkeley Historical Society, 1982), 1.
[35]Hussey and Stein, 71.
[36]n.a., *Berkeley, California: A City of Homes* (Berkeley: Conference Committee of Improvement Clubs, 1905), 3.
[37]Today referred to largely as a poet, Keeler had an impressive scientific career as well. He headed the Natural History Museum at the California Academy of Sciences for several years. He ultimately drifted away from the sciences and spent his final years writing radio plays.
[38]Charles A. Keeler, *The Simple Home* (Berkeley: Hillside Club, 1904), viii.
[39]Keeler, xlv.
[40]Keeler, 4.
[41]Starr, 299.
[42]Keeler, 18.
[43]Cardwell, 58.
[44]Cardwell, 29.
[45]Cardwell, 58.
[46]Cardwell, 83.
[47]Many of these homes, including Maybeck's own, were destroyed by the fire of 1923, which swept westward from a drought-parched Wildcat Canyon and over the hills through northeast Berkeley. Cardwell, 240-45.
[48]Esther McCoy, *Five California Architects* (New York: Praeger, 1960), 24.
[49]Elmer Grey, "The New Suburb of the Pacific Coast," *Scribner's Magazine* 52 (July 1912), 36.
[50]Grey, 49.
[51]Cardwell, 119.

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CHAPTER THREE: "THE MODERN PASTORAL: THE BAY TRADITION AND THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE, 1926-1945"

By the end of the 1920s, Bay Tradition architecture seemed to depend as much on the eclectic and whimsical (yet tastefully restrained) use of historicist elements as it did on sensitivity to site and the generous use of redwood. Bay Tradition architects had for years answered the region's rapid industrial and urban growth with well-wooded suburban neighborhoods which gave residents abundant contact with the outdoors, and this continued even though the Bay Tradition (and American architecture in general) would be transformed in the 1930s with the advent of the International Style. Created in Europe by a coterie of left-leaning architects and championed by Germany's Bauhaus art school, the International Style was deemed the only true modernism, and it promised to reform architecture by rendering it more honest and consistent with the reality of modern industrial-era life. This meant renouncing historicism, regionalism, and nature, theoretically resulting in a new universal form that would rationalize architecture and eradicate the differences among regions and nations.

Instead of disappearing, as the International Style's proponents believed would happen to vernacular styles in general, the Bay Tradition responded by accommodating new technologies and forms. At the same time, though, it maintained an antimodernist approach that contradicted the International Style's dictum that the past was worthless. This antimodernism, like that found in the Arts and Crafts movement, both depended on urban industrial life and contradicted it, making it very much a part of the modern cultural canon (despite the often-dramatic proclamations of the International Style's creators). By accommodating the International Style's simple forms and use of sophisticated building methods, the Bay Tradition changed from a somewhat whimsical historicst

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style into a resilient antimodernist regionalism which maintained its long-established connection to the physical environment.

ANTIMODERNISM AS MODERNISM

Understanding modernist architecture requires confronting the contradictory nature of modernity and modernism. According to cultural theorist Marshall Berman, modernity and modernism are hardly easily definable entities, and they do not represent permanent values or meanings.[1] He depicts modernity as "a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction,"[2] in which nothing is concrete. The modern contradicts not only the traditional, but also itself. Paraphrasing Marx, Berman says, that because modernity inspires questioning and overturning, it breeds self-negation; "it is ironic and contradictory, polyphonic and dialectical, denouncing modern life in the name of values that modernity itself has created. . . ."[3]

The modernism Berman describes is inherently impermanent and self-negating. In modernist architecture one sees a self-proclaimed hegemony (the International Style) countered by antimodernisms, which borrow from the past but are nonetheless modern because they use modern building technology and are produced by modern social, political, and cultural conditions. Antimodernisms such as Arts and Crafts throve in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often driven by a sense of loss and fragmentation, which its practitioners addressed by selectively trying to restore some aspects of the past. For example, literary scholar Charles Reagan Wilson argues in *The New Regionalism* that the regionalist movement in pre-World War II America, often considered "anti-modern," was actually part of a larger American modernist movement, geared toward reconstructing a sense of community fragmented by changes brought by industrialization and urbanization.[4] Earlier, the Arts and Crafts movement had tried to revive an aesthetic

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lost in the face of industrialization and consumerism.[5] In the 1930s, the Bay Tradition reconciled these opposites, fusing the antimodern and modern aesthetics to give its buildings' users the proverbial best of each.

According to historian T. J. Jackson Lears, antimodernism resulted from a modern malaise created by "overcivilization," which had made life seem inauthentic and unfulfilling to some because it cut people off from authentic working and living experiences, especially those involving nature. Quoting an 1888 *North American Review* article, Lears sums up this mentality: "Once let the human race be cut off from personal contact with the soil, once let the conventionalities and artificial restrictions of so-called civilization interfere with the healthful simplicity of nature, and decay is certain."[6] "The soil" in this case seems to mean not strictly the earth, but also some aspect of healthier, less refined, more primitive living, which urban industrial society seemed to have shunned.

Also, Lears writes: "Overcivilization . . . had promoted a spreading sense of moral impotence and spiritual sterility - a feeling that life had become not only civilized but also curiously unreal."[7] Lears characterizes modern civilization as "weightless," paralleling Berman's sense that modernity lacks solidity, and points out that antimodern sentiments were common among the affluent, whose lives were perhaps more overcivilized than others.[8] This reaction against the conditions of modernity - excessive civilization, consumerism, loss of community or sense of authentic experience - is a product of modernity itself and, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bred efforts to restore some of what had been thought lost.

In architecture, these restoration efforts were manifested in northern and central Europe as "National Romanticism," which will be discussed in chapter five. In northern California, this reaction helped

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inspire the Bay Tradition, which was an effort to counteract the excesses of modernism with an antimodernism that tried to preserve something authentic about its region and manifest it in the urban landscape.

THE ROOTS OF MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE

Between the mid-nineteenth century and 1920, various forms of modernist art and architecture emerged in Europe and the United States, all of which reacted in different ways to the industrial capitalism that was reshaping those nations' cities, economies, and aesthetics. Whether exploring the uses of machinery in emulating past decorative styles, like Art Nouveau, or turning away from the past altogether, as did the International Style, all of the new modernisms responded to varying degrees to the role of machines in everyday modern life and the way that materials were treated and displayed. Architecture in particular responded to the machine, first by incorporating new industrial technologies, then by celebrating them as the center of a new aesthetic.[9]

During the late nineteenth century, however, a vocal minority in the world of art and architecture gradually came to view technology not as merely a way to create buildings, but as a style itself. Its practitioners dubbed it "functionalism," and later "modernism."[10] The use of iron and steel skeletons altered architecture because it allowed more freedom of form; massive masonry walls were no longer necessary for bearing loads, so that walls could serve more as screens and could accommodate larger windows. Buildings that did not conceal their underlying structures were esteemed for their "honesty," and modernism's early practitioners, including Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, saw their plainness not as ugliness but as aesthetically genuine.

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Early examples of this came, fittingly, from the United Kingdom, then the world's premier industrial power. These include Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace of 1851 (Figures 3-1 and 3-2), train stations, and commercial structures like warehouses. Vernacular builders like Greene, whose Sheerness design is considered a direct ancestor of the International Style, did not advertently create plain architecture to express any kind of modern ethos. He probably meant to simply keep building costs low. However, an almost-Puritanical fervor for unadorned architecture and functionalism spread among modernists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These early modernist buildings were revered for their lack of adornment and for the ways they conveyed a new aesthetic based on iron and steel. According to art historian Ian Sutton, "the extent to which the steel skeleton was expressed on the exterior of a building was to become almost a moral issue."[11]

The notion of plainness as truth gained in urgency after 1900, when European artists and architects reacted against the emphasis of traditional styles and Art Nouveau on ornament, shunning it as gaudy and dishonest.[12] Viennese architect Adolf Loos anticipated the International Style's doctrines when he claimed in 1908, "Ornament is crime."[13] According to Lears, the gaudy eclecticism of the late Victorian Era represented "energy which often lacked a controlling purpose and embodied . . . cultural confusion," which modernism had hoped to solve.[14]

The emergence of Swiss-born French architect Le Corbusier (born Charles Edouard Jeanneret) supplied modernist architecture with a series of manifestoes and ideas. These reinforced not only the idea of the machine's dominance, but also the notion that the past was a falsehood that had to be wholly renounced. Formerly a Cubist painter, Le Corbusier seconded Loos' sentiments in 1925, by declaring that

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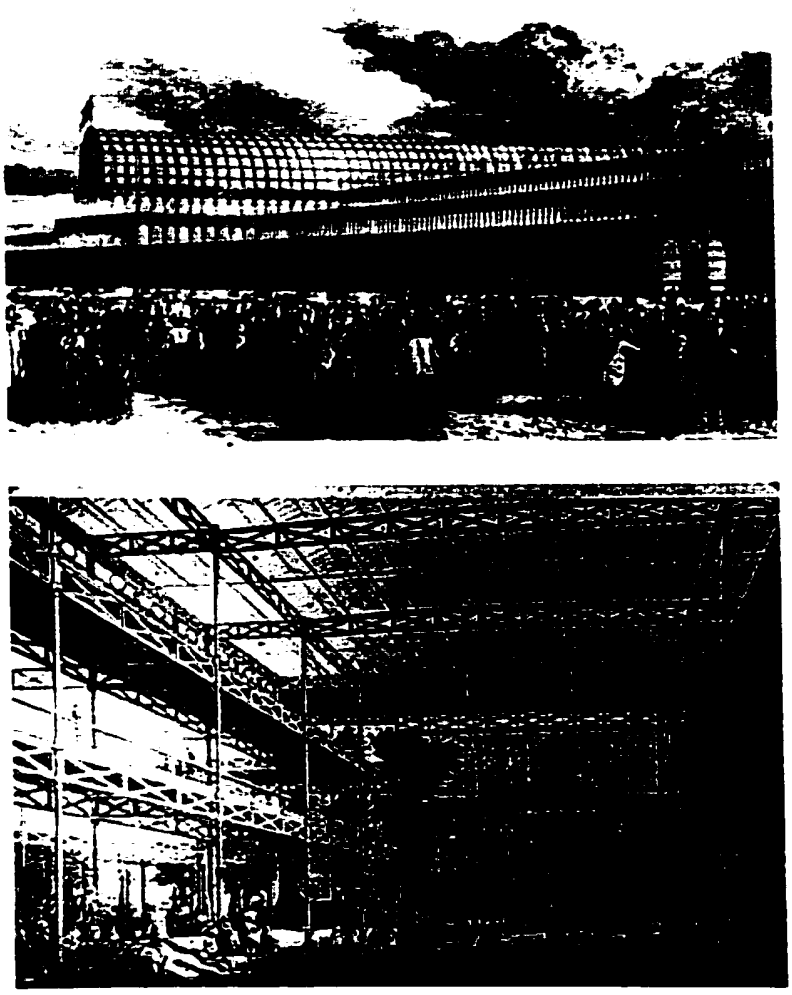

Figure 3-1 and 3-2. Joseph Paxton, Crystal Palace, London, 1851. Both from website http://arch.ou.edu.

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"bric-a-brac, vulgarity, and pretentiousness had become the order of the day. Nobody knew what to do. . . . I was left with this conviction: We have to begin from scratch."[15] Later lectures and writings, delivered in often-breathless prose, went even further; in 1929, he broadened his attack on tradition (which he deemed "academism"), condemning it roundly as a social cancer:

> It is academism that is thus clutching the vital parts of the social body. . . . That state of slavery does not bring it great satisfactions; on the contrary. Its existence is passed in a junkyard of illegitimate objects. Conventions, customs, are words of surrender! Among the objects that surround it, in the houses it builds, in the cities it inhabits, in its social life, in the moral code it submits to, everything is inexact, inappropriate, unsuitable, worthless. . . . We must forge a new greatness for the machine age, the new face of the new soul of modern times.[16]

Like Italy's pre-World War I futurists, Le Corbusier took a somewhat nihilistic view of traditions in general. He claimed that they could not withstand the forces of mechanization, which he accurately maintained had touched every aspect of life, from communications, travel, and consumption to politics, art, and economics. The Bay Tradition represented one of these vernacular practices; however, it did not succumb to the new orthodoxy, but accommodated it rather easily.

According to its early theorists, the International Style aimed to begin anew, wiping away the refuse of the past and replacing it with architecture that celebrated the new reality of the machine. It emerged in the late 1910s and early 1920s from several sources, chiefly from the Cubist movement in painting and the Bauhaus art school in Weimar-era Germany. It was not a united front; its practitioners were not all purists equally devoted to its stark, white, sterile, machine-like look.[17] Architect Alfred Barr, one of its earliest American proponents, articulated its three chief aesthetic principles in 1932:

> emphasis on volume - space enclosed by thin planes or surfaces as opposed to the suggestion of mass and solidity; regularity as opposed to symmetry or other kinds of obvious balance; and, lastly, dependence upon the intrinsic elegance of materials,

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> technical perfection, and fine proportions, as opposed to applied ornament.[18]

Visually, the International Style embraced strictly rectilinear forms and smooth surfaces (usually white stucco, but not exclusively), with long bands of windows that barely interrupted the buildings' smooth skins. Previous modernist styles included some kind of decoration. Art Nouveau used plant-like motifs and Art Deco embraced a cubist sense of color and design, but the International Style rejected ornament altogether.

International Style modernism celebrated the machine and the industrial vernacular because it represented the new capitalist vernacular; the modern "folk" were, in its adherents' view, more likely to be urban factory hands than rural peasants. Because its practitioners were taken with the presence of a large urban proletariat, International Style architecture embraced an aesthetic celebrating work and viewed the factory as a sort of temple.[19]

The earliest buildings to manifest International Style principles were factories, most notably Peter Behrens' AEG factory in Berlin, completed in 1907 (Figure 3-3), and Walter Gropius' Fagus factory in Alfeld, Germany, built in 1910 (Figure 3-4). Both are rectilinear, relatively unadorned brick structures with large expanses of steel-sashed windows, though the Fagus factory is much more representative of the emerging International Style. The building is predominantly glass and steel supports, with only thin brick piers breaking the smooth surface. The Bauhaus compound in Dessau, Germany, completed in 1925 (Figure 3-5), repeated this concept in larger form and is among the first "glass boxes" for which Gropius and Mies are most famous. Instead of using applied historically influenced ornament, both buildings derive their aesthetic value from the purity of their designs and the stark, yet attractive use of materials. In this sense,

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Figure 3-3. Peter Behrens, AEG Factory, Berlin, 1909.

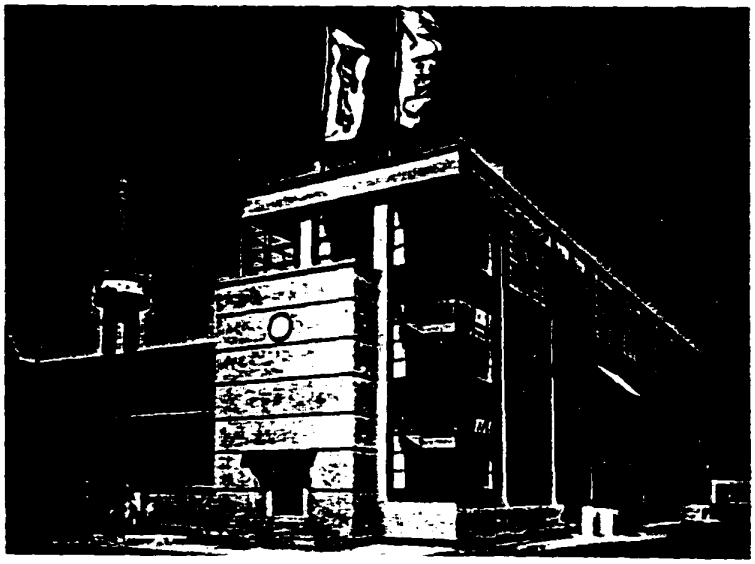

Figure 3-4. Walter Gropius, Fagus factory, Alfred an der Leine, Germany, 1911. Both from website http://arch.ou.edu.

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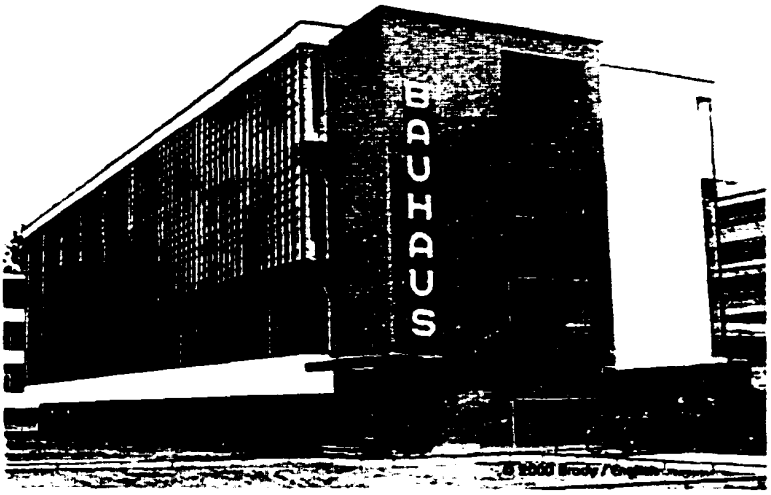

Figure 3-5. Walter Gropius, Bauhaus compound, Dessau, Germany, 1925. From website http://www.yorku.ca.

Figure 3-6. Marcel Breuer, Breuer house, Lincoln, Massachusetts, 1940. From website http://www.esto.com.

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International Style modernism conveyed a richness that the Bay Tradition paralleled in its use of simple forms and local materials, though it did not manifest the same attachment to nature or specific localities.

Modernism in general has been interpreted as the unconditional eschewing of all historical styles, but this is more Le Corbusier's idea than that of Gropius or Mies. Modernist architecture actually rejects mainly elite decorative elements and favors vernacular structures for their perceived honesty and utilitarian purposes. Basically, Louis Sullivan's dictum from the 1880s, "form follows function," served as the basis for modernists' aesthetic values. Modernists thought that buildings serving humble needs preferable to those serving elite functions.

Not all of the style's practitioners embraced only the smooth white wall or built the faceless boxes that Le Corbusier favored. For example, Breuer's house in Lincoln, Massachusetts (1940) (Figure 3-6), uses the rich materials that Barr prescribes - in this case, New England granite and painted redwood panels, along with large expanses of glass, which render the structure light-looking and lacking much mass. "Glass Walls in New England," a *House and Garden* piece about the home, claims, "The old jibe 'looks like a hospital' is becoming ever more happily untrue."[20] Though the article did not elaborate on this remark, it implies that as early as 1940, the International Style drew criticism for its sterile appearance, and its functionalism (the basis of its "truth") was doubted. Critic Lewis Mumford wrote in 1947: "What was called functionalism was a one-sided interpretation of function, and it was an interpretation that Louis Sullivan, who popularized the slogan 'Form follows function,' never subscribed to."[21]

Bay Tradition architects agreed with this assessment, among them William Wurster, who despised Mies' work.[22] He and others tried to avoid this sterile look by combining an appreciation for native

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materials and climate with the International Style's clean, simple forms. They embraced a broader view of modernism, one that fused the International Style's formal simplicity with the Bay Tradition's informal antimodernism, that latter expressed by the healthy appreciation for the outdoors, materials that evoked the natural terrain, and structural elements that blurred the boundaries between outdoors and indoors. The result was a kind of antimodern modernism that used efficient, durable building technology (no small consideration, given the region's frequent earthquakes) yet also tried to preserve and express the physical surroundings and pleasant climate, two of the things that helped constitute the Bay Area's unique self-perception and sense of place.

THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE REACHES AMERICA

The International Style reached the United States in 1932, with an exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and it drew mixed reactions almost from the moment of its debut. The exhibit was co-created by critic Henry-Russell Hitchcock, architect Alfred Barr, and 24-year-old Phillip Johnson, the scion of a wealthy Cleveland family who became an architect a few years later under Mies' tutelage. It celebrated the new architecture as fresh and adventurous, and its supporters, like critic Elizabeth Mock, hailed it even twelve years later as something still beyond the grasp of most American observers:

> This architecture was so new and surprising that hostile and ill-informed critics and architects still frequently assert that the Museum is trying to impose a foreign style on the United States. . . . First to proclaim the new European architecture here and constantly interested in its more recent developments, the Museum has also been first to show the growth of an authentic modern American style, its relationship to the American background and its debt to, as well as its reaction from, the "International Style."[23]

While Mock and others sang the praises of the International Style and presented it to the public as the new architectural hegemony, other

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Americans were less taken with it, including those who embraced some of its forms and technology. Housing expert Catherine Bauer (who later married architect William Wurster and shared his dislike for the International Style) praised the 1932 exhibit but seemed ambivalent about its message. While she stated in her 1932 review of the exhibit that "Architecture is not a medium for expressing individual personality"[24] and hailed modernism's unity, she also saw the International Style less flatteringly, calling Mies and Le Corbusier "men who, fortunately, have never in practice fully lived up to their own rules and cliches."[25]

Some American architects, such as Austrian-born Los Angeles architect Richard Neutra, embraced the International Style's industrially-based, leftist-influenced style and Le Corbusier's sleek designs and even openly imitated the new European "masters." Philip Johnson, for example, who organized 1932's International Style exhibit, spent two decades reproducing Mies van der Rohe's work. In addition, the Chicago-based firm of Skidmore Owings Merrill became, by 1960, the chief designers of "glass-box" commercial and public structures in the United States.

Others, though, paid the International Style little mind. They preferred instead the colorful highly ornamental Art Deco style (manifested mainly in commercial structures like office buildings and motion picture theaters) or continued to use historicist designs on top of steel skeletons. Bernard Maybeck, for example, practiced into the early 1940s and never shifted away from his whimsical eclecticism. Also, historicism neither fully disappeared from modernist architecture nor faded away in the United States, and many regionalist architects, like Finland's Alvar Aalto, embraced historical forms as well as new technology. Even after World War II, Levittown and other East Coast housing tracts relied on traditional Cape Cod and saltbox designs, and

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in California the ranch house occupied both sides of the modern-antimodern divide. According to art scholar Kenneth Trapp, "California, while participating in and sometimes leading the advance of modernism, has been the symbol of antimodernism - looking back to a golden day before the gringo came to violate the virgin land."[26] As the late Victorian elites in Lears' study sought authentic, uncomplicated, "natural" experience to counter the effects of modern civilization, elite northern Californians embraced the ranch house as a symbol of simpler, healthier, spiritually richer living, as rendered and revised by the Bay Tradition's most fervent post-1930 modern regionalist.

WILLIAM WURSTER: THE BAY TRADITION'S SECOND PHASE, 1927-1941

If Bernard Maybeck epitomized in his work the Bay Tradition's early phase and set many of its standards, then William Wilson Wurster (1895-1973) is perhaps the quintessential Bay Area modernist, a successful designer whose works easily evoked both the progressive and the traditional. Like other Bay Tradition architects, he was an unabashed regionalist with at least the same enthusiasm for northern California as Maybeck, one of his mentors and chief influences. Born in Stockton to an affluent banking family, he worked part-time for a local architect while still in high school and studied architecture under Maybeck at the University of California. He graduated in 1919, at the height of his mentor's creativity.

In the Bay Area, Wurster saw great opportunity for personal freedom in his designs, largely because he considered the residents to be as adventurous as the architects and shared with them a unique grasp of aesthetics. Unlike orthodox followers of the International Style, who frequently insisted on following its theories to the letter and even disregarding the client's desires,[27] Wurster and his Bay Tradition

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contemporaries aimed to build homes and other structures that suited current needs and satisfied clients' desire for comfort.

In 1949, he characterized his clientele and fellow Bay Traditionalists as "a group . . . who placed greater value on ideas and proportions than on permanency, refined detail, conformity or amount of money spent."[28] More importantly, as did his Bay Tradition predecessors, Wurster believed the Bay Area was a visually and socially unique place deserving an architecture that spoke of uniqueness:

> The West has still a pioneer society. An element of gambling, of taking a chance, exists still, and this goes into the lives so that who you are is not so important as what you are. This is quickly translated into the homes, and there is not so much a fetish of permanence and tradition.[29]

After traveling and working peripatetically for several years, Wurster created his first signature work, the Gregory family farmhouse in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Scotts Valley, in 1927 (Figures 3-7 and 3-8). Calling it "a house of carpenter architecture,"[30] Wurster built a simple dwelling that set the stage for his subsequent domestic works, thanks in part to his client's philosophies. The widow of an affluent San Francisco attorney, Sadie Gregory had been a disciple of sociologist Thorstein Veblen and shared his distaste for conspicuous consumption, gaudy, ostentatious architecture, and the cold formality of the International Style, by then just appearing in the United States in the form of East Coast vacation homes and corporate headquarters.[31] Rejecting the formal, elaborate Mission Revival-style plans drawn by John Galen Howard (an established Beaux-Arts architect who both taught at Berkeley and designed several buildings there), Gregory turned to Wurster, one of her son's college friends.[32]

Wurster kept only Howard's L-shaped plan, turning an elaborate mansion into a small, simple compound that more closely resembles a California farmhouse than a wealthy widow's home. A covered veranda spans the front of the home, whose living room, hall, and bedrooms all

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Figure 3-7. William Wurster, Gregory house, Scotts Valley, California, 1926-1927. From Daniel P. Gregory, "An Indigenous Thing: The Story of William Wurster and the Gregory Farmhouse," *Places* (Fall 1990).

Figure 3-8. Gregory house, interior. From Gordon Young, "Blueprint for Obscurity," *Metro* http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/01.18.96/wurster-9603.html.

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open onto the front yard, which also contains a water tower. Its walls are whitewashed vertical boards (which quickly attained a weathered but not shabby look), while the roof is wood-shingled. The overall effect is extremely casual and even anti-affluent, despite the fact that Wurster's homes were neither cheap nor flimsy. The house does not overwhelm or dominate its wooded, hilly site but blends into it rather unobtrusively.

The house's cultivated simplicity set the stage for the rest of Wurster's career. Most of his domestic work was modest-looking, even minimalist, despite the homes' comfort and pleasant settings. A few writers, like Bay Area journalist Gordon Young, have claimed that the Depression and its resulting austerity influenced Wurster's simple designs and relatively intimate scales.[33] However, the Depression struck after the Gregory house was completed and was over after World War II, when Wurster's commissions became even more numerous. In truth, Wurster often used sturdy, costly materials (like custom windows and Douglas fir plywood) that looked cheaper than truly cheap products like sheet rock, because of their durability and because he rejected ostentatious architecture. He claimed to have no agenda other than his clients' needs, though some of his statements revealed otherwise. He said in 1936, "I have no mission to put over any given expression on any client. I like to work on direct, honest solutions, avoiding exotic materials, using indigenous things so that there is no affectation and the best is obtained for the money."[34]

Though Wurster had no aim for the Gregory house other than building a friend's home, he drew a great deal of attention within California. Along with Los Angeles architect Cliff May, he can be considered a creator of the long, low-lying California ranch house, which in the postwar era was replicated in large numbers throughout both California and the United States.[35] *Sunset* magazine featured the

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Gregory house in a July 1930 cover story as a modern, yet picturesque work. By the early 1940s, *Sunset* was hailing ranch houses in general as the quintessential California home. In its series on "Western living," the magazine's editors echoed the sentiments that drove not only Wurster but his Bay Tradition predecessors as well:

> Early California settlers had many preconceived ideas about houses. But in building their first simple homes they had no thought of establishing a "California style." Their main objective was shelter; traditions were far less important than the materials and labor at hand. . . . The resulting California homes had an honest quality that we respect.[16]

A subsequent article about California ranch houses presented the style as classic and common-sense houses suited to California's climate and hybrid cultural character:

> The ranch house cannot be defined, for it is the house of the North as well as the house of the South. It is the house of the Yankee, the Spaniard, the Mexican. It is built of adobe, of redwood, of fir. . . . More than a set of definable details, all of its variations have in common an appropriatness [sic] to a landscape and a way of life.[17]

The ranch house, as Wurster and his contemporaries conceived it, represents antimodernism in its efforts to preserve (and update) an aspect of early California life. As with antimodernism in general, it stems from reactions against the artifice of modern urban life by turning to a facet of California's past that seemed to speak of authentic, healthy experience. International Style houses, already starting to appear in both Los Angeles and the Bay Area, could be made light and with ample windows which offered some contact with the outdoors, but these did not evoke the place through their use of materials and had no connection (even an ersatz one) to California's past.

Wurster began a long and extremely prolific partnership with Theodore Bernardi in the mid-1930s and added Donald Emmons to his firm a decade later. After the Gregory house, he continued to refine the ranch house idiom, consistently using the same elements that his Bay Tradition

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predecessors embraced - well-landscaped yards, generously-sized windows, and an openness to the outdoors. For example, his Corbus house in Menlo Park, on the peninsula not far from Stanford, looks like what became in the postwar era a prototypical suburban ranch house. While the Gregory house was a vacation home in a rural hilly area, the Corbus home of 1939 (Figures 3-9 and 3-10) featured some of the same elements (a gently hipped roof, a low-lying-L-shaped plan, and wooden siding, albeit shingled) and sat in the middle of a relatively large, well-landscaped yard. More importantly, its large windows open onto the yard and serve as screens, protecting the occupants from extremes while admitting ample light and letting those in the large living room look onto the pleasant greenery outside. Also, the house features a large backyard patio for outdoor socializing and recreation. Wurster, like Maybeck an avid hiker and camper, considered outdoor spaces and leisure important, even if for more passive activities like gardening or lounging.

The Pope house (1940) (Figures 3-11 and 3-12) in the hilly, affluent East Bay community of Orinda offers a slightly less traditional version of the ranch home. With its flat, corrugated metal roof, twin steel smokestacks, and emphasis on horizontal planes, it resembled an International Style home much more than a traditional California ranch house. However, it avoided looking sterile with its curtain-like redwood walls, large windows, and large living room with the fireplace set into a smooth stone wall. Also, while Le Corbusier proposed an architecture that rejected nature, the Pope house featured an open courtyard in the middle of its back area, open to the elements at the back and through a large round hole in the roof. What emerged was perhaps Wurster's most modernistic ranch home, but its comfortable, informal look keeps it from seeming cold and sterile.

Like Polk and Maybeck before him, Wurster was able to convey in his urban homes a sense of the sylvan. For example, the Sibbett house,

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Figures 3-9 and 3-10. William Wurster, Corbus house, Menlo Park, California, 1939. From Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism*.

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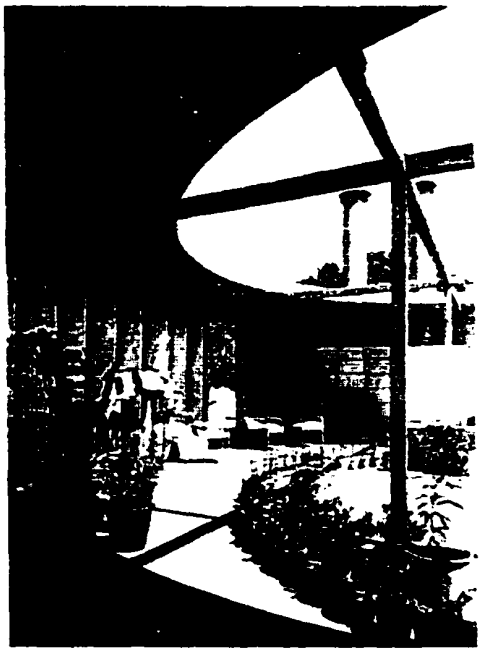

Figures 3-11 and 3-12. William Wurster, Pope house, Orinda, California, 1940. From Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism*.

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completed in 1941 (Figure 3-13), was a somewhat box-like structure on a narrow hillside lot in San Francisco, but its stained horizontal redwood-board siding and ample windows gave it a less urban appearance, which was among the Bay Tradition's chief aims. Also, it is open to the elements while conveying a sense of privacy; it boasts front and rear patios (covered by wooden fencing), and the leafy greenery in front partly obscures the walkway leading to a recessed, partly hidden front door. The result is a handsome yet modest structure, urban yet at the same time slightly secluded-looking.

Wurster and other like-minded modern regionalists were conscious of both past and present, fetishizing neither. They focused less on doctrine than on creating architecture on their terms. Architectural historian Marc Treib writes:

> . . . the American architects who adopted the modernist stance [in the 1920s and '30s] and broke with tradition never took too literally Le Corbusier's idea of the house as a "machine for living." Virtually every dwelling in the new idiom retained a residual expression of locale and historic architectural precedent.[18]

Wurster's sense of regionalism reflected that of the Bay Tradition's creators and was reinforced by the fact that he had studied under Bernard Maybeck at Berkeley. He visited Maybeck's home on various occasions and marveled at his mentor's rich yet simple use of materials.[19] Wurster's use of local materials, especially redwood, and the attention he paid to site and views gave him an affinity with past Bay Tradition architects, as well as continuity from his predecessors. Though he rejected the historicist designs that Maybeck favored, which modern architects disparaged as elitist, Wurster's appreciation for native materials, lush planting, and the relaxed, informal Bay Area lifestyle connected him firmly to the past. He also believed in balanced indoor-outdoor relationships, and often considered the house subordinate to the site. Writing in 1949, Wurster claimed, "The hills

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Figure 3-13. William Wurster, Sibbett house, San Francisco, 1941. From Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism.*

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and great bay . . . have always brought the emphasis on what you look at, not what you live in."[40]

Wurster was no less true to modernism's canons than adherents of the International Style. The Gregory house borrowed from vernacular forms (the ranch house was initially a Hispanic creation, though more often rendered in adobe than redwood) and paid close attention to the use of native materials. It also avoided ostentation, in both its modest scale and its lack of ornament. However, Wurster accommodated antimodern desires by drawing on California's past in his ranch house designs. To Wurster and his clients, the past was hardly dead or undesirable, but instead represented healthy living and a more intimate, genuine experience of the Bay Area's natural elements. Like other antimodernisms, Wurster's work evoked the past as a possible remedy for the present.

Wurster himself seemed uncomfortable with the "modern" label in general, seeing it as confining and superficial. In a 1940 *House and Garden* piece on modern architecture, Wurster rejected the term because, to him, it lacked permanence:

> The word "Modern" has been badly abused and is apt to carry with it at the present time a connotation of a set style, just as Louis XV carries a notation of style. This so-called "modern" in usage means angular . . . a placing of arbitrary straight lines dissymetrically, a negation of things past, a flaunting of things to come, an overemphasis on change, the use of harsh jolts for an exploitation of the word "modern."[41]

Wurster defined modernism as changing and ephemeral, neither monolithic nor even necessarily long-lasting. He concludes by wishing that observers were not so taken with the promises modernists like Le Corbusier made:

> It would be a great triumph, I believe, if one could think so clearly that an entire design be done, built, and viewed, and that the onlooker in seeing the result would be charmed, and intrigued without any arbitrary sensing of it as "modern." In this way we use the common root of knowledge, and our architecture flowers with a natural growth from the past.[42]

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His sense of place was shaped by his deep affinity with the Bay Area landscape; to him, regionalism lay in the region's physical aspects, not in something impermanent like a specific historical moment. Though he borrowed the ranch house from the pre-Gold Rush era, Wurster did not use ersatz Hispanic elements; instead, he incorporated and evoked the best aspects of landscape while subordinating the architecture itself. He followed the patterns of seeking authenticity that Lears and Orvell mention; the "truth" of the Bay Area for Wurster was its physical form and feeling.

Wurster had no desire to build monuments to his clients, any specific historical period, or to himself; the "fetish of permanence and tradition" he mentioned in the 1949 Bay Tradition exhibit brochure held no appeal for him. His views earned him the scorn of architects who found his work too informal for their liking. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, fellow regionalist Frank Lloyd Wright routinely and gleefully denigrated Wurster's work, considering it too simple in appearance and scale to be what Wright considered architecture.[43] In 1951, for example, when Wright gave a speech at Berkeley's architecture school, Wurster (whom Wright dubbed "Redwood Bill") gave Wright a warm introduction. On taking the podium, Wright, who apologized for neither his arrogance nor his disdain for other architects, opened with, "There is one thing wrong with Bay Area architecture: William Wilson Wurster."[44]

Despite Wurster's popularity in California, disregard for his work was apparently widespread. Art historian William Coburn concurs that Wurster's rejection of ostentation and orthodoxy made him unpopular in some quarters:

> As a result [of his approach], we see the simultaneous blending of "mixed metaphor" - the high art forms of Europe with the "down home" urban forms translated into a mixture of meaning - such that both used together create architectural tension. This duality both set Wurster apart from his traditionalist peers and his

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> contextualism alienated him from his emerging younger and more committed "peer group."[45]

One can argue that Wurster's chief commitment was less to style than to people. His clients concerned him greatly. Indeed, he was close friends with many of them. Like his Bay Tradition predecessors, he was centered on the people and lifestyle of the Bay Area and put both style and ego aside in order to serve his clients' needs without imposing his philosophy upon them. He had little patience for abstractions or theory. Early in his career, he claimed he would "never do so-called modern merely to be against what has been" and valued "remembering constantly that the personal victory is nothing - the result everything - it is of no importance who furnished the idea, the main thing being that it is there."[46] Like his Bay Tradition peers, Wurster put human activity and comfort before style, and made constant contact with the Bay Area's natural environment a priority. These traits distinguish both him and the Bay Tradition from orthodox modernism, which lacked attachment to nature and rejected sense of place.

THE BAY TRADITION AND WORLD WAR II

Until the early 1940s, the Bay Tradition was mainly a regional phenomenon, scarcely known outside the San Francisco region and confined largely to an elite clientele. With the advent of World War II, however, the Bay Tradition spread beyond its narrow class and geographical scope and became a more broadly representative regional idiom, because its practitioners built more than just homes for well-off clients. Because it could be executed fairly cheaply, the federal government tapped numerous Bay Area architects to create a wide range of structures to serve the war effort, specifically worker housing, schools, and commercial and government buildings. Not only did Bay

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Tradition modernism become more visible and geographically widespread, but it also became more recognizable to outsiders as a regional paradigm. By 1940, Bay Area architecture, with its tradition of modest, nature-evoking buildings, had attracted notice from outside the region.

The war spurred a massive migration to the Bay Area. Roughly 500,000 people arrived between 1940 and 1944.[47] This defense industry-spurred influx created numerous social problems. There were housing shortages, overcrowded schools, and commercial centers unable to handle the sheer number of newcomers. Smaller bayshore cities, where shipyards had either long existed or were quickly created when the war began, were affected most severely - especially Vallejo, then a small, blue-collar town on the northeastern shore of San Pablo Bay. Home of the Mare Island naval shipyard since 1854, Vallejo had a relatively small housing supply and was unprepared for the massive influx of war workers, mostly African-Americans from the western South and whites displaced from the Dust Bowl regions of Oklahoma and Texas.

Bay Tradition architecture assumed new dimensions in 1941 when the Federal Public Housing Administration (FPHA) commissioned Wurster and Palo Alto architect Ernest Kump (who reinvented school design during his career) to design two housing projects in northern Vallejo. Carquinez Heights and Chabot Terrace were created strictly as emergency housing and thus were "demountable" (a federal euphemism for prefabricated), so that when the war ended they would be dismantled and eventually replaced by permanent tract housing (which has since happened). In keeping with his sense that architecture was not meant to be permanent, Wurster had no desire to create what might eventually become a slum, as did other Bay Area war-worker housing projects, like Marin City and Atchison Village in south Richmond. Addressing the question of the projects becoming slums when the war ended, Wurster claimed that he sought "to prevent a ghost-town curse on Vallejo when the emergency is over"[48] and

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wrote, "The major contribution of this office to the project was, I am sure, the determination to scar the hills as little as possible."[49]

Carquinez Heights (Figures 3-14 and 3-15), a 1,677-unit project on the treeless hills of northern Vallejo, was completed in 1941 for workers at the Mare Island shipyard. With the exception of about twenty-five "experimental" units of varying size and floor plan, the houses were identical single-story, flat-roofed, redwood- and plywood-sided dwellings. They sat on wooden posts and concrete blocks instead of poured foundations. Detached but clustered together in groups of three, the houses were distinguished from each other mainly by color. According to Wurster, half of the houses were sand-colored or unpainted plywood, a quarter were red, and the remainder were green, blue, or yellow. Not merely shacks, the houses featured full bathrooms and kitchens, laundry areas, and generous fenestration, and were all aligned to face either east or west, the better to let in sunlight. Because Carquinez Heights was meant to last only as long as the war, very little earth was moved except for streets, and the entire project lacked landscaping. Wurster explained that "on these dry, dusty slopes large gardens are apt to be a burden rather than a blessing for hard-working people, only temporarily settled."[50]

Reactions to Wurster's defense-housing work varied considerably. The government was pleased with the project because it did not exceed the prescribed per-unit cost of $2,845, which was well below the local average cost of $4,000 per privately-built home.[51] In a March 1942 article about prefabricated housing's wartime proliferation, *Time* savaged the industry at large by deeming it "the unwanted and long-ailing stepchild of the housing industry." The unnamed author also criticized the federal government's use of the word "demountable" and assailed Wurster specifically: "Instead, they are playing up the word "demountable," explaining that after the war boom these houses can be

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Figures 3-14 and 3-15. William Wurster, Carquinez Heights, Vallejo, California, 1941. From William Wurster, "Carquinez Heights," *California Arts and Architecture* (November 1941).

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taken down and moved away. If all of them continue to be such eyesores as the hivelike . . . colony completed last fall in Vallejo, Calif., they never will be missed."[52]

In his defense, Wurster wrote the editors and received a grudging apology. As he explained, he was basically creating emergency housing for an emergency situation, and thus accepted the task's constraints:

> Standardized prefabricated houses on a bare piece of ground cannot and should not look like a country club suburb. But Carquinez Heights is far from being "drab." . . . We, who made the site plan . . . made an earnest and perhaps even successful effort to produce something bold and dramatic and interesting. It could not be intimate and individual in any case.[53]

Architect and Engineer, which was published in San Francisco and thus certainly familiar with Wurster's work, counterattacked *Time*'s editors and the eastern architectural establishment:

> The eastern architects acknowledgely have been looking to the west for new and desirable departures from time-worn eastern styles of architecture. Perhaps the editors [of Time] should do likewise but apparently they are wedded to the Philadelphia style of great rows of identical brick houses, for they criticize the varying colors of Mr. Wurster's. Well, it must be admitted that varying colors simplify the problem of identification . . . [unlike] that monotone which seems so to delight some eastern editors.[54]

In addition, the anonymous author (who may have known Wurster personally) lambasted Henry Luce himself, sarcastically adding, "We in California have thought for some time that Mr. William Wilson Wurster was a REAL architect but we must have been mistaken for you are always mistaken when you disagree with an eastern editor."[55] While the Bay Tradition exemplified in this simple, mass-produced form suited the federal government's needs, its divergence from Eastern tastes seemed too challenging for an elite conservative like Luce to reckon with. To Eastern critics, the projects' informality and apparent flimsiness did not look innovative or appropriate for government architecture.

Whatever critics thought of Carquinez Heights, it apparently served its functions well enough to warrant a second such commission for Wurster, who was again assisted by Ernest Kump. Chabot Terrace, also

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located north of downtown Vallejo, was substantially larger and more complex, accommodating 3,000 families and including a fire station, several small commercial structures in a sort of early strip mall, two elementary schools, and a junior high school. Completed in 1943, Chabot Terrace was also demountable (except for its schools) and geared toward the automobile. While it was temporary and rapidly built, with acres of identical houses, it anticipates postwar suburbs by being composed largely of small ranch-style buildings, with winding streets, low-lying commercial buildings, and a clear orientation toward the automobile, all features that other wartime projects in the Bay Area's urban centers, like Wurster's own Valencia Gardens in San Francisco, did not share.

Although it was a housing project in a bare, treeless landscape, Carquinez Heights managed to convey a sense of livability that subsequent large-scale urban projects, like St. Louis' doomed Pruitt-Igoe complex, never did. Wurster himself commented that he paid careful attention to "the needs and pride of human beings - a place for people, adults and children - a happy place in which to live."[56] Few other housing projects - even Bay Traditionalist Vernon DeMars' hailed Easter Hill Village in Richmond, built in 1954 - could ever be credited with promoting human happiness, and one does not know whether Carquinez Heights itself could have done so in the long term. It was dismantled shortly after the war and its residents moved elsewhere, so it did not exist long enough to become either a squalid slum or a long-lasting example of successful public housing.

AMERICA DISCOVERS THE BAY TRADITION

Even before the end of World War II, art and architecture critics like Elizabeth Mock of New York's Museum of Modern Art began recognizing the Bay Tradition's uniqueness. As the International Style became repetitious, they saw the Bay Tradition as the next step in American

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modernism - certainly as an improvement over the International Style's blandness and perceived lack of attention to people's comforts and needs. Mock, a staunch defender of the style in the 1930s, conceded in 1945 that it was neither necessarily hegemonic nor the perfect manifestation of the modernist ideals. She readily admitted that the Bay Area was fertile architectural ground and represented a strong, visible link between modernism and its vernacular past:

> It was suddenly discovered [at least by Easterners] that California had been enjoying a continuous but curiously unpublicized tradition of building in this new sense [simple, straightforward forms and use of unadorned local materials]. Berkeley, for example, is full of weathered redwood houses, some built fifty years or so ago, which in spite of their eclectic detail look amazingly fresh to a modern eye.[57]

In 1947, Lewis Mumford lamented the stagnation of New York architecture and lambasted the International Style, claiming that it had lost the support of even its champions, like Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Calling the style "mechanical and impersonal and aesthetically puritanic," he continued:

> Le Corbusier's dictum of the twenties - that the modern house is a machine for living in - has become old hat; the modern accent is on living, not on the machine. . . . The rigorists placed the mechanical functions of a building above its human functions; they neglected the feelings, the sentiments, and the interests of the person who was to occupy it. Instead of regarding engineering as a foundation for form, they treated it as an end.[58]

He cited and praise Bay Area architecture, which he dubbed "the Bay Region style," for restoring the human element to modern architecture. He considered it a paradigm for modernism in general, offering not a sterile sameness, but a warm fusion of the local and the universal.

Though Mumford named no specific Bay Area architects, both Maybeck and Wurster practiced what Mumford praised, building for people who shared his sense of what the Bay Area meant and what housing should entail. Though he usually built for affluent clients and later for large corporations (such as Bank of America, for whom he designed several suburban branches), Wurster extended the Bay Tradition's

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aesthetics to the wartime working class as well, breaking it at least temporarily from its formerly narrow class focus.

By the end of the 1940s, the Bay Tradition had become nationally visible and had become more vernacular as well, at least temporarily. After World War II, partly because of its visibility and its architects' growing reputations, it spread into other building types, including schools, commercial buildings, and government facilities. For roughly two decades, from 1945 to 1965, it was not simply a minority voice in its home region, like the Bay Tradition's first phase had been. Instead, Bay Area modernism reached the heights of both its visibility and popularity in the affluent postwar years of suburban growth.

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[1]According to Berman, "modernity" is the state of being modern, applicable to Western culture in general over the last few centuries; "modernism" applies more specifically to its aesthetic and political philosophies.

[2]Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 15.

[3]Berman, 23.

[4]Charles Wilson Reagan, ed., *The New Regionalism* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1998), ix-x.

[5]Kenneth Trapp, ed., *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California* (Oakland: Oakland Museum, 1993).

[6]Lears, 28.

[7]Lears, 4-5.

[8]Lears, 313.

[9]Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 123-185, 248-261; Ian Sutton, *Western Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 304-353.

[10]Sutton, 304.

[11]Sutton, 312.

[12]Orvell, xx-xxi, 141-142.

[13]Sutton, 319.

[14]Lears, 33.

[15]Jacques Guiton, ed., *The Ideas of Le Corbusier* (New York: George Braziller, 1981), 115-116.

[16]Le Corbusier, Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 32-33.

[17]Le Corbusier preferred this look and gave the impression that all modernism should resemble his. In truth, he spoke passionately about a movement that was not particularly large, united, nor as absolute in its doctrines as he was.

[18]Alfred Barr, quoted in Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 29.

[19]The International Style was a form of Bauhaus-influenced modernism, thanks to the role that Austrian architect Walter Gropius played in both. They are sometimes spoken of in tandem.

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[20]Anonymous, "Glass Walls in New England," *House and Garden* 77:4 (April 1940), 52.
[21]Lewis Mumford, "The Sky Line: Status Quo," *The New Yorker* (11 October 1947), 109.
[22]Gordon Young, "Blueprint for Obscurity," www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/ 01.18.96/wurster-9603.html, 18 January 1996.
[23]Elizabeth Mock, *Built in U.S.A.* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1944), 5.
[24]Catherine K. Bauer, "Exhibition of Modern Architecture: Museum of Modern Art," *Creative Art* 10 (March 1932), 201.
[25]Bauer, 203.
[26]Trapp, 1.
[27]Brent Brolin, *The Failure of Modern Architecture* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1976), 8.
[28]Anonymous, *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1949), 7.
[29]Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region, 7.
[30]Daniel P. Gregory, "An Indigenous Thing: The Story of William Wurster and the Gregory Farmhouse," *Places* 7:1 (Fall 1990), 78.
[31]Gregory, 87.
[32]Gregory, 83.
[33]Young, n.p.
[34]Anonymous, "Quoting Mr. Wurster," *Architectural Forum* 64 (May 1936), 36.
[35]David Gebhard, Eric Sandweiss, and Robert Winter, *The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1985), 579.
[36]Anonymous, "Some Sources in Western Living," *Sunset* 86:2 (February 1941), 12.
[37]Anonymous, "Timeless: The California Ranch House Will Never Be Dated," *Sunset* 86:5 (May 1941), 24.
[38]Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 18.
[39]Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region, 7.
[40]Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region, 8.
[41]Anonymous, "Tell Me, What Is Modern Architecture?" *House and Garden* 77:4 (April 1940), 46.
[42]"Tell Me, What Is Modern Architecture?" 46.
[43]Wurster, in turn, admired Wright and apparently never voiced resentment at Wright's jabs.
[44]Treib, 98.
[45]William Coburn, William Wilson Wurster: A Northern California Modernist Architect (San Francisco: Startling Papers, 1980), 33.
[46]Anonymous, "Quoting Mr. Wurster," 36.
[47]Marilynn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 8.
[48]William Wurster, "Carquinez Heights," *California Arts and Architecture* 58 (November 1941), 34.
[49]Wurster, "Carquinez Heights," 34.
[50]Wurster, "Carquinez Heights," 34.
[51]Fred Langhorst, "Experiment: The Office of William Wilson Wurster Attacks the Problem of Mass Housing," *California Arts and Architecture* 59 (April 1942), 28.
[52]Anonymous, "Prefabrication's Chance," *Time* 39:11 (16 March 1942), 77.

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[53]William Wurster, "Letter to the Editor," *Time* 39:15 (13 April 1942), 10.

[54]Anonymous, "Vallejo's Prefabricated Houses," *Architect and Engineer* 149:2 (May 1942), 32.

[55]"Vallejo's Prefabricated Houses," 32.

[56]Anonymous, "Public and Commercial Structures: Chabot Terrace (FPHA), Vallejo, California," *Pencil Points* 25 (October 1944), 80.

[57]Mock, 14.

[58]Lewis Mumford, "The Sky Line: Status Quo," *The New Yorker* (11 October 1947), 109.

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CHAPTER FOUR: "PARADISE BUILT: THE BAY TRADITION, 1940-1970"

With the rise of the defense and electronics industries during and after World War II, the Bay Area became one of the most affluent and fastest-growing regions in the United States. Roughly half a million people migrated to the Bay Area during the war, and the migration continued into the 1950s and '60s; the nine-county region's population rose from roughly 1.85 million in 1940 to 2.5 million a decade later and to nearly 3.9 million in 1970.[1] The rise in population and the demand for more schools, housing, office space, and other structures made the Bay Tradition more than simply a domestic idiom for the well-to-do. Using the International Style's basic forms and technology, Bay Tradition architects applied their sensibilities to non-residential works as well. Not only did Bay Area modernism become more visible and identifiable as a regional paradigm, but it also came to epitomize a distinctly Western suburban lifestyle, based on the same cultivated appreciation of a tame, clement nature that the Bay Tradition's creators noted.

"CALIFORNIA LIVING," *SUNSET* STYLE

Sunset magazine deserves much credit for spreading the notion of a Bay Area lifestyle (in the guise of "Western living"), especially in terms of its attitudes toward appreciation of the outdoors and its influence on home design. Though it had promoted a Bay Area-based vision of the Far West since 1898, by 1940 *Sunset* had become more than a mouthpiece for its founder, the Southern Pacific Railroad. After a phase in the 1910s and 1920s when the magazine was as much literary as lifestyle-oriented, it was in the postwar era less oriented toward tourists than toward an emerging suburban middle-class readership which, the magazine claimed, embraced a distinctly "Western" lifestyle which was tasteful and cultivated yet informal, physically healthy but not

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rugged or spartan. A major component of this was home design centered around the same kind of tame, easily-controlled "nature" that Americans at large began seeking around 1900 and could now afford more easily than ever.

Exactly when *Sunset* invented the notion of "Western living"[2] is unclear, but it apparently emerged in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In 1941, the magazine published a series on ranch-style houses, and architect William Wurster mentioned the phenomenon in a 1944 article, praising Bernard Maybeck and Willis Polk for "[attempting] to catch and express the bold free quality of our city and country-side and the active informality of our western pattern of daily living."[3] *Sunset* reflected a more suburban readership after World War II, keeping up with the nation's changing demographics, and the magazine itself followed its readers by moving to the suburbs in 1951. After fifty-three years in downtown San Francisco, it relocated to a sprawling new complex in Menlo Park, a short distance from Stanford University and on the edge of what was already becoming "Silicon Valley." The new headquarters, a 30,000-square-foot, single-story building of adobe and redwood on seven well-landscaped acres, looked less like a corporate office than an oversized suburban home (Figure 4-1). In an August 1951 article proclaiming the new offices open, publisher L. W. Lane called it "the fulfillment of a dream we at *Sunset* have cherished for a great many years - the dream of a suburban, and typically Western, home-of-its-own for the Magazine of Western Living."[4]

The magazine's idea of "outdoor living" was clearly rooted in home entertainment, dining, casual recreation, and house and garden decorating. This was at the heart of early Bay Tradition architecture, though in its early phase this lifestyle was less widely available. Many of *Sunset*'s home design articles in the postwar era extolled the virtues of "outdoor rooms," in which barriers between indoors and

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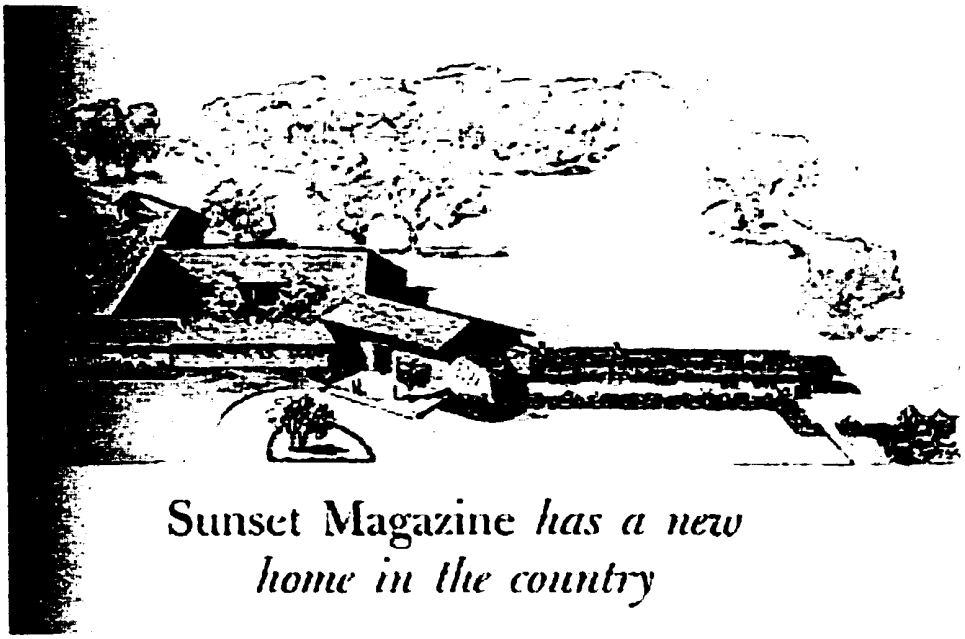

Figure 4-1. Cliff May, *Sunset* Magazine headquarters, Menlo Park, California, 1951. From *Sunset*, August 1951.

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outdoors were eliminated to bring socializing and entertainment outside. "Remodeled: the story of Western living" sets the decade's tone in April 1950, by showing redesigning ideas which open a suburban home onto its garden with picture windows, patio, and sun shields. The author explains, "Given half a chance, the urge for free and easy Western living does pleasant things to houses."[5]

In the same issue, a related story extols the virtues of "the roofless room," essentially an outdoor space enclosed by moveable wooden walls to create separate leisure areas within a single backyard. The anonymous author explains the conditions by which this kind of nature should be enjoyed: "Living part of his life outdoors is the Westerner's privilege and pleasure. . . . [But you] do not just take the outdoors as it is. You manipulate it for your own purposes. When you move casual, everyday living outside you wish to have protection and privacy."[6] *Sunset* moved outdoor leisure into the home and called for home designs that easily accommodated it. The established notion of curbing the elements for one's enjoyment persisted, though closer to home and more closely combined with everyday living.

The connections between *Sunset* and architecture become clearer throughout the 1950s, largely through the magazine's penchant for patios and picture windows. The magazine placed great importance on gardens, treating them less as yard decoration than as rooms, or extensions of indoor spaces. In a February 1951 article about gardening and Western living, gardens are valued not for what they produce, but for extending the comfortable, tasteful interior into the outdoors:

> Long ago, garden landscaping ceased to be thought of as a formal decoration applied upon the land. Westerners used garden space to increase, to brighten, to add color and life to living space. A covered terrace plus garden walls more than doubled the size of the living room. Gardens under lath or glass expanded the kitchen. Private patios opened small bedrooms.
> So, through using garden space as living space, the Western homeowner found ways to break open the box and increase the size of each room in the house.[7]

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During the 1950s, the magazine's architecture-related articles focused on structural and design elements like patios and lanais, while occasionally featuring articles on entire homes, usually custom houses by noted West Coast architects. It is clear, when studying *Sunset* during the 1950s, that the magazine's vision of "Western living" did not include all Westerners. For the most part, it addressed those with sufficient income and cultivated tastes, who would presumably appreciate and adopt the magazine's suggestions. "A critical look at the changing Western house" (May 1956) showcased twenty-four major changes in postwar American housing, such as open plans, glass walls, power kitchens, indoor-outdoor rooms, and "climate controls" (like wind baffles and roof overhangs). Such pricey, modern homes were, the unnamed author admits, "the kind of house we publish month after month in *Sunset* . . . to keep readers abreast of new thinking in home design."[8]

The magazine rarely featured tract homes, and when it did, they tended to be somewhat pricey. "13 award-winning Western homes" (June 1956) featured several architect-designed tract houses costing from $10,000 (roughly average for the time) to over $40,000, among them homes by Anshen and Allen, the firm responsible for designing the Eichler home. While the author's point was "the demonstration that top-flight architectural planning is increasingly available in speculatively-built homes,"[9] the reality was that the kind of "Western home" the magazine showcased was seldom affordable enough for much of the homebuying public. More often, middle- and working-class families moved into affordable developments like San Lorenzo Village, where one did not find the stylish, spacious, convenience-laden houses *Sunset* upheld as the Western standard. The article's underlying premise seemed to be that 1950s speculative housing was seldom "top-flight" and thus not worthy of being part of the "Western living" canon.

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Sunset, a quintessentially Bay Area institution, was clearly purveying the same notion of a domesticated nature that the Bay Tradition had long articulated. Indeed, the magazine adopted views long articulated by Bay Tradition architects and presented them to a large mainstream readership. For its affluent postwar readership, *Sunset* presented a vision of a lifestyle they called "Western" but that was also distinctly Californian, and more precisely from the Bay Area. Not only did it promote an appreciation for the tamed outdoors, but it also showed its readers an eclectic, cultivated, socially gracious lifestyle based on design, habits, and material possessions.

Between 1951 and 1954, almost equal space was devoted in almost every issue to the lanai (a kind of Polynesian veranda) and ideas for efficient bookcases, hinting at an urbane, outdoor-oriented lifestyle. This was also amply expressed in its many articles on cooking (Polynesian, European, Asian, and Mexican dishes frequently appear in its culinary section, especially "folk" dishes), travel (usually to resorts and attractive small towns, not to the Far West's remaining wilderness), and décor (folk art and Euro-American designs appear synonymously in the ideal *Sunset* home). This eclecticism suited the Bay Area and provided the basis for the *Sunset* outlook - cosmopolitan and sophisticated, yet relatively free-spirited and informal.

EICHLERS AND BOHANNONS: POSTWAR TRACT HOUSING

The postwar era marked a watershed for Bay Tradition home design. Early Bay Tradition homes were generally custom-designed and not available as tract houses; after World War II, though, Bay Tradition housing became more visible and relatively more accessible to the middle- and upper-middle-class homebuying public. Also, the Bay Area's poorest residents received a small dose of this style, as housing projects built in the 1940s and '50s embraced some elements of Bay Area

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design and aimed to elevate public housing above its usually bleak standard. However, those in between - the growing ranks of blue-collar, first-time homeowners - opted not for stylish regionalist housing, but for the quickly-built houses that "merchant builders" built quickly and sold cheaply.

It is relevant to examine the background of tract housing in the Bay Area because it shaped the region's residential landscape, and generally not on Bay Tradition terms. The Bay Area's residential vernacular was shaped not by Bay Tradition architects, but by those in the housing business - realtors and builders. In her study of suburban housing, historian Carolyn Loeb argues that speculative tract housing is a real vernacular because it is pervasive, seems anonymous, and, like other "folk" forms, is poorly documented. It is driven not by elites or those serving them, but by trained professionals working within local contexts of buyers' needs and desires.[10] In the 1920s, residential development moved from simply selling vacant lots to prospective homeowners (which partly explains the rise of the bungalow, discussed in chapter five) to building completed homes in subdivisions whose identity was reinforced by the houses' relative similarity to one another.[11]

One of Loeb's examples is Westwood Highlands, a middle-class development in San Francisco, located just south of Twin Peaks. A middle-class "streetcar suburb," its creation was driven not by architects or prospective residents, but by the large realty firm of Baldwin and Howell, which guided the building and design process.[12] The firm enlisted architect Charles Strothoff, who specialized in period styles like Mission Revival and Mediterranean. He created a series of standardized, familiar designs that, while eclectic, had a familiar and cohesive character throughout the development.[13] The development was somewhat costly when it opened in 1925, with homes starting at $9,500

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(the national average was roughly $6,000), and the neighborhood attracted mainly middle-class professionals.[14]

The Bay Tradition, on the other hand, was not entrepreneur-driven, with the exception of Joseph Eichler in the 1950s. Northeast Berkeley's development between 1895 and 1920 was more a product of the Hillside Club, a political-social-aesthetic movement rather than a commercial undertaking. The Bay Tradition before World War II was architect-driven, not powered by realtors or builders, and was long openly at odds with popular architectural tastes. Though it presented itself as a regional vernacular, the Bay Tradition was less truly vernacular than the relatively nondescript tract homes that the majority of Bay Area residents sought and purchased.

The closest the Bay Tradition came to vernacular expression was in the 1950s, with the homes of Bay Area homebuilder Joseph Eichler. The houses his company built throughout California now carry considerable status among California homeowners and architecture aficionados, who consider them the apex of mid-century California modernism - cleanly-designed, spacious, and comfortable. A native of New York City, Eichler (1900-1974) moved to San Francisco in the mid-1920s and spent twenty years working for his in-laws' dairy and poultry business before becoming a builder in 1947. An irascible man of generally philistine tastes, Eichler was nonetheless fond of modernist architecture (especially Frank Lloyd Wright's work) and aimed to bring modern design to the homebuying public at large, not just to the most affluent who could enlist noted architects.[15]

In 1949, after some success with conventionally-designed homes in Sunnyvale, Eichler began a fruitful partnership with Wright disciple Robert Anshen, whose firm (Anshen and Allen) created Eichler homes' basic forms. These included open interior spaces, large windows opening onto patios or lush yards, colorful redwood siding, and sometimes

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atriums, which placed the garden directly inside the home. Most sat on typically winding suburban streets, though Anshen made ample use of the cul-de-sac and pioneered the concentric street design, which slowed traffic in such neighborhoods (Figures 4-2 and 4-3). 1955 was the company's most productive year, with 900 Eichler houses built in Palo Alto, San Mateo, Walnut Creek, San Rafael, and Sacramento.[16] By 1961, Eichler homes had been built in thirty-three California cities, including Los Angeles (where local firm Jones and Emmons produced designs similar to Anshen's).[17]

Eichler was cranky and argumentative, occasionally chasing away prospective buyers whom he considered "unfit" for his houses, but he was also progressive in his sales policies. Reflecting the Bay Area's relatively tolerant social atmosphere, he sold homes to Asians as early as 1950 and to African-Americans in 1954 - before California passed its fair housing act and despite occasional homeowner complaints.[18]

Though Eichler claimed he built for families of average means, his homes cost between $18,000 and $24,000 in 1957. In some cases, this was almost double the price of houses in working-class communities like San Lorenzo.[19] Modest neither in size (1,800 square feet and more) nor amenities, "Eichlers" often featured two or more bathrooms (then somewhat rare) and had large, plentiful windows, both vital Bay Tradition traits. They also featured ample landscaping while other new housing tracts were bare, and many homes had atriums or indoor patios that lowered barriers between indoor and outdoor spaces. They facilitated the outdoor entertaining and "garden living" that *Sunset* magazine was by now promoting, and indeed they were considered quintessentially "Bay Area" homes in the 1950s. In fact, *Sunset* editor Proctor Melquist claimed that a poll the magazine conducted in the mid-1950s showed that about sixty percent of its readers owned Eichler

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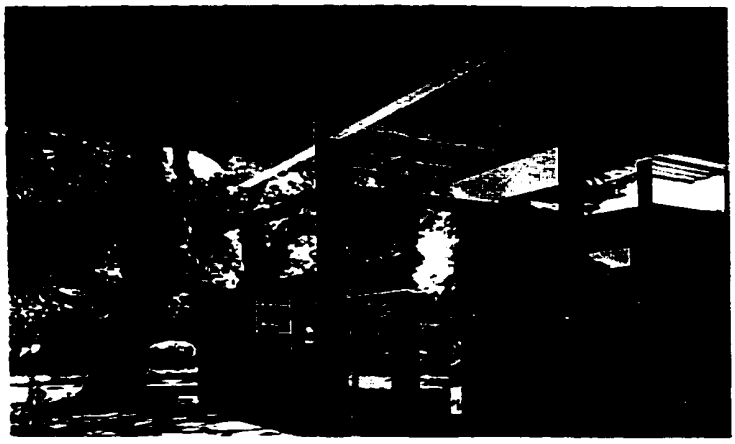

Figures 4-2 and 4-3. Anshen and Allen, Eichler home atrium and interior, Palo Alto, California, circa 1955. From Jerry Ditto, *Eichler Homes*.

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homes,[20] a testament both to the kind of readers *Sunset* courted and the class of homeowners to whom Eichler catered.

While the Bay Area's middle- and upper-middle-class homebuyers sought custom-made or Eichler houses in established suburbs, and the poor received relatively handsome public housing, those in between - blue-collar workers - were, for the most part, left out of Bay Tradition living. Though Kump schools were built in working-class Bay Area communities like San Lorenzo, Hayward, Concord, and parts of Santa Clara County, the people settling there were concerned less with style than with affordable housing, and "merchant builders" like David D. Bohannon met the demand.

According to urban geographer James E. Vance, the Bay Area's suburban housing boom in the 1940s and '50s was, like that of the United States in general, influenced not only by changing racial demographics (especially in Oakland) but also by the automobile, which was ubiquitous in California. Though the Peninsula and East Bay both had extensive streetcar service in the early twentieth century, it failed to expand as the region's sparsely-built, far-flung postwar suburbs grew. One result was that, as car ownership became more common and the area's economy grew more decentralized, workers were less likely to live close to their jobs, and the Bay Area's new postwar communities became clustered and stratified by occupation and income rather than shared workplaces.[21]

In addition, industrial decentralization helped disperse the region's working class into a wide band of suburbs, mostly along the bayshore and along the Carquinez Strait. Geographer Richard Walker contradicts the picture created by Sam Bass Warner in *Streetcar Suburbs*, which depicts the growth of suburbia as the result of expanded transit services.[22] Walker asserts that writes that "industrial dispersal had created the sprawling form of the American metropolis. Neither change in transport modes nor residential suburbanization is primarily

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responsible for shaping the outward spread of urbanization."[23] As fellow urban geographer Greg Hise claims in his study of Los Angeles' industrial suburbs,[24] Walker says that as industries steadily moved away from San Francisco and to the East Bay and San Mateo County (particularly to Oakland, South San Francisco, Richmond, and northern Contra Costa County), suburban growth spread, regardless of the streetcar and automobile.[25]

As a result, the Bay Area's suburban landscape was shaped as much by the working class as by the more affluent. This factor helped contribute to the dominance of the bungalow throughout blue-collar flatland areas like north and east Oakland, west Berkeley, and west and central Richmond. As an example, Walker offers Melrose Highlands, a subdivision of bungalows built for the employees of east Oakland's Chevrolet factory.[26]

The landscape was also influenced by migration, especially by whites who had left the Dust Bowl region after 1935. By 1950, they comprised a sizable portion of the Bay Area's industrial working class. Vance argues that the new blue-collar arrivals (drawn mainly by the booming defense economy) wanted to live in expansive suburbs akin to those in Southern California. Vance writes:

> The shipyard worker, if he carried any expectation of the culture and landscape of California, brought an anticipation of the common man's California, which was essentially the life and landscape of the Los Angeles Basin. The conservative and inner-directed Bay Area provided an answer neither to his settlement nor his social aspirations. . . . [so] the former southerner from Louisiana or Texas, resident typically in Hayward, Sunnyvale, or Concord, molded those places so they became almost indistinguishable from parts of the Los Angeles Basin. . . . Thus the transformation of the Bay Area came mainly in terms of vast areas of socially indeterminate housing tracts rather than in the creation of many tradition-liberated Sausalitos.[27]

The Bay Area's new working-class arrivals, many of them transplanted Okies and Midwesterners, now relatively prosperous and economically stable, wanted to buy homes in quiet suburbs as quickly as

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possible. Assimilating themselves to the more affluent Bay Tradition taste mattered little, since few blue-collar families could afford Eichler houses.[28] During World War II, many such workers still lived in crowded war housing in Oakland, Vallejo, Marin City, and Richmond, often sharing the projects with African-American migrants (who comprised the majority of public-housing residents in the area by 1960).[29] White workers took advantage of the FHA's Title 6 program (which favored racially-restricted suburbs) and moved to all-white subdivisions like east Oakland's Brookfield Village or, more importantly, San Lorenzo Village.[30]

Created in 1944 under Title 6, San Lorenzo Village deserves credit as the West Coast's answer to Levittown, and indeed predates the more famous Long Island development by two years. Its creator, David D. Bohannon (1899-1995), invented what became known as the "California method" of rapidly mass-producing homes by building "cutting yards" near home sites and assigning detailed tasks to teams of workers. One group might only install sinks, for example, or cut studs, pour foundations, or lay carpet. Bohannon's first subdivision, a 288-home tract of two- and three-bedroom houses, was built in Sunnyvale and drew mostly migrant foundry workers who, according to *Fortune* magazine, were beset by snobbishness in their search for suitable housing:

> The Joshua Hendy Iron Works at Sunnyvale . . . had serious trouble getting workers to stay. The men could find no place to live. Palo Alto and Sunnyvale both chose to regard the newcomers as Arkies and Okies, and, as such, dangerous neighbors and disastrous tenants.[31]

The neighborhood did not degenerate into an Okie slum, and, inspired by this modest success, Bohannon created San Lorenzo Village three years later, building the town's first 700 homes in only 693 working hours and saving roughly thirty percent on both labor and materials. By 1946, San Lorenzo had 1,492 houses which sold for about $6,000 each.[32] Its two- and three-bedroom houses were small and

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markedly modest. They had plain stucco exteriors, somewhat small windows, and no garages until after the war ended and restrictions on building materials were lifted. There was no landscaping (indeed, it took years for the community's trees to mature), and certainly no distinctive regional style (Figures 4-4 and 4-5).

Though built in the Bay Area, they did not fit into the Bay Tradition rubric, since they neither used wood as prominently nor evoked nature in the way that Eichler homes did. However, homes like these proliferated in the Bay Area's blue-collar suburbs because they filled an urgent need. Bohannon's homes were criticized for their cheapness and rapid construction, but *Fortune* defended them:

> No one, certainly not the builder who uses the California method, claims that it results in "the house of the future" or anything like it. The Bohannon war houses are all alike: approximately 1,000 square feet of floor area with frame construction on concrete foundation. They all have plaster exteriors with stucco or wood-siding finish; they have wallboard or lath-and-plaster interior finish. Heat is supplied by a small gas heater placed rather inaccessibly under the floor somewhere near the center of the house. Electrical outlets are usually two to a room. Closet space is modest indeed. Most of the houses have no doorbells.
>
> But no one living in any of the houses complains of jerry-building. The roofs stay on; the wind and water stay out. There are other more positive advantages. At San Lorenzo . . . the streets are safe for children, the commercial district . . . does have the air of being the center of a living community.[33]

By the 1960s, the quickly-built tract homes that many Bay Area homebuyers could afford generated criticism from academics and other observers, who considered them a visual blight. The region's rapid growth had brought overcrowding, the destruction of thousands of acres of rich agricultural land, environmental problems like the steady filling of San Francisco Bay, and visible ugliness in formerly pleasant-looking pastoral and semi-rural communities. In 1962, Berkeley folksinger Malvina Reynolds recorded the comically scathing "Little Boxes," about Daly City's identical housing tracts and the conformists she believed inhabited them.[34] Three years later, Berkeley design professor Torben Strandgaard wrote that the Bay Area had fallen prey to

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Figures 4-4 and 4-5. David D. Bohannon Company, homes in San Lorenzo, California, 1944-1946. From *Fortune*, April 1946.

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poor planning and urban sprawl, much of it driven by the automobile's dominance. In urgent tones, he argued:

> The need for criticism is most acute. The typical car, the juke box, the slums now being built in San Mateo, San Leandro, and San Rafael reflect this need. . . . Some planners approach matters with a "let's be subtle, change takes time" attitude. The Peninsula area has "taken its time" and we are now confronted with the creation of slums from San Francisco to San Jose.[35]

If the region did not manage its environment better, Strandgaard claimed, what awaited was, if not doom, then certainly the ruin of a unique and pleasant place: ". . . while groups talk, the entire Bay, with its incredible opportunities for beauty, becomes further encased in garbage, further hemmed in by what will surely be the residential slums of tomorrow, our tract homes."[36]

In 1963, travel writer James Benét wrote that the Santa Clara Valley, where civic leaders had pushed for extensive growth, was "a national full-blown example of 'urban sprawl.'" He added some pointed criticism of its nondescript tract housing:

> With distinguished exceptions, [tract houses] indicate that conventional construction is characterized by a frequent skimping on materials that has caused the cheapest houses to be labeled "dingbats;" by crude efforts to vary the houses through such naive devices as adding dummy shutters to some and "storybook" turrets to others.[37]

Benét also singled out Daly City, a the San Francisco suburb which Malvina Reynolds satirized in "Little Boxes." In the postwar era, Daly City filled with relatively inexpensive homes, mostly built by contractor Henry Doelger, whose firm had built much of San Francisco's Sunset district in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. Daly City's residential landscape was characterized by virtually identical row houses with small street frontages and monotonous designs. Benét called it "an illuminating display of suburban problems" and "a nice display of a problem in urban esthetics."[38] By contrast, he cited Eichler homes as exceptions to the increasingly shoddy suburban landscape, mentioning their suitability to the mild climate and use of redwood and mahogany,

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though he added (in a criticism often leveled against Wurster) that "in groups the houses make an unsatisfactory 'shanty-town' effect."[39]

San Lorenzo and other similar postwar suburbs were hardly the kinds of sylvan communities Maybeck and Polk had envisioned, but they were more typical of suburban growth in the Bay Area (and, indeed, the United States) in the immediate postwar years. Modest, working-class subdivisions, which were entrepreneur-driven rather than the product of architects' and affluent residents' visions of perfect communities, were especially appealing to first-time homebuyers who had endured the Depression. These buyers cared less about aesthetics than safety and affordability, and were often less affluent or educated than the cultivated buyers who preferred and could afford Eichler homes in sylvan suburbs. As a result, while the Bay Tradition remained the regional paradigm, the growth of blue-collar landscapes throughout the Bay Area kept it from physically dominating the region. This contrast made its class bias even more evident, and helped hasten its demise in the mid-1960s because of its exclusivity.

HOUSING PROJECTS: URBAN VILLAGES

At the opposite end of the social spectrum, Bay Tradition architects achieved some degree of success in providing the area's poorest residents with pleasant public housing, which (like homes for the affluent) aimed to provide pleasant living spaces regardless of class status. This occurred partly because Bay Tradition architects often worked for the federal government during the war, designing a wide variety of military and civilian structures, and partly because these same architects continued Willis Polk's mission to spread the gospel of architectural taste.

During World War II, about 500,000 people migrated to the Bay Area, mainly Midwesterners and Southerners seeking jobs in the defense

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industries, and many were unable to buy homes for some time after their arrival, or even to find suitable apartments in the crowded area.[40] Bay Tradition architects William Wurster and Vernon DeMars created housing projects that, unlike bleak, bland-looking modernist projects elsewhere, had an informal, house-like feel that made them look less like slums than like modest suburban neighborhoods. DeMars continued to build housing projects after the war, most notably Richmond's Easter Hill Village in 1954, which at the time was hailed as an innovative development in public-housing architecture.

Built on a partly-quarried hill near the city's harbor, the project comprised over 300 detached and semi-detached units. Its one- and two-story plans had between one and four bedrooms per dwelling, as well as varying color schemes, materials, yard sizes, and fenestration. It was also less densely-populated than most projects, with only twenty families per square acre.[41] Set in a rectilinear street grid, Easter Hill Village had winding streets, like a contemporary suburban development. Also, fifty-nine percent of the project's 21.5 acres were devoted to yards and public open spaces, with boulders arranged to add variety and a "natural" look to the urban site (Figures 4-6 and 4-7).[42]

Easter Hill Village aimed to bring Bay Tradition amenities and ambience to the poor, for whom the Bay Tradition was not initially conceived. The project was designed "to avoid at all costs the institutional and drab appearance that had stigmatized so many low-rent schemes in the past as 'projects.'"[43] DeMars and partner Donald Hardison recognized the shortcomings of housing projects in general, especially DeMars' Woodville farmworkers' project in Yuba City, which was built in 1941, but within a decade was a slum. Once a devoted International Style purist, DeMars admitted in 1966, that his rigid sense of modernism led him to design a sterile, institutional-looking, scarcely livable complex:

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Figures 4-6 and 4-7. Vernon DeMars and Donald Hardison, Easter Hill Village, Richmond, California, 1954. From Claire Cooper Marcus, *Easter Hill Village*.

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> We could have been generous enough to give [Woodville's residents] something that would have recalled their own homes, but we were puritanical; we weren't going to provide any of the picture-book inheritance which would have made things familiar to them. Where we went wrong was in applying avant garde solutions to the most disadvantaged economic and social class.[44]

DeMars and Hardison instead aimed to replicate a "laissez-faire" urban landscape in Easter Hill Village, which would avoid the stark, institutional appearance of International Style modernism. Though DeMars compromised with the FHA and built row houses instead of detached homes at Easter Hill Village, he got his way on virtually every other design point. Says urbanist Clare Cooper Marcus, who studied the complex in detail two decades later, Easter Hill Village was unique among housing projects because DeMars and Hardison, unlike other public-housing architects, cared what the tenants wanted:

> [The architects] took great pains to produce an environment that was attractive and villagelike, and devoid of the image of a "project." Curving streets and cul-de-sacs suggested a more informal and rural setting than the stereotyped grid-pattern streets in the rest of Richmond.[45]

Shortly after Easter Hill Village was completed, DeMars tried the same thing across the Bay in Marin City, the site of another former shipbuilding community. Just north of Sausalito, Marin City was founded by the National Housing Administration (NHA) in 1942, as a community for workers at the Bechtel Corporation shipyard. Shortly after the shipyard opened, residents of Sausalito complained of overcrowding and disorder, which they blamed on the swarm of Southern blacks and whites who moved there seeking work. In response, the NHA quickly built barracks-like apartments, dormitories, and detached and semi-detached homes, which housed nearly 6,000 residents by the end of 1943.[46] Though serviceable, Marin City looked rather like a typical project, drab and nothing like the suburban homes then proliferating throughout Marin.

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In 1958, DeMars was charged with redeveloping Marin City. He responded with an ambitious plan "to create a beautiful community where blighted temporary war housing existed," with attractive housing and recreational amenities "which would play a key role in developing a sense of gaiety and visual excitement in the community."[47] The plans included 160 apartments and 170 detached single-family homes, ranging in size from 1000 to 1200 square feet, which was comparable to those in San Lorenzo. Both houses and apartments were shingle-sided, with decks and stilts to anchor them onto their hillside sites, which offered attractive views of the bay (Figures 4-8 and 4-9). If Wurster's Carquinez Heights was considered attractive and unlike conventional projects, Marin City promised to offer the visual appeal and feeling of a middle-class suburb instead of low-income, mostly African-American housing.

However, budgetary concerns forced DeMars to abandon much of his ambitious scheme, substituting concrete-and-redwood apartments for most of the detached homes. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) considered DeMars' initial proposal "wasteful" for its insistence on balconies, sliding glass doors, and landscaping. In response, Representative Clem Miller, whose congressional district included Marin County, publicly attacked the GAO, charging that "the accounting mind strains to achieve a design for mediocrity":

> In the world of barracks-like public housing, these structures at Marin City give satisfaction and pleasure to see. Yet this is a project singled out by GAO to report adversely. . . . It almost seems as though the very fact of creating a pleasing public housing project must find some censure at GAO; that public housing must be spartan rather than esthetic. . . . It is quite clear to me that the Parthenon could never have been built under the watchful eye of GAO. . . . We need not fear for our country when we are putting up great buildings of imaginative design. We need fear for ourselves when we stop doing it.[48]

Budgetary concerns ultimately acted against the creation of attractive public housing, and creating a pleasant environment for

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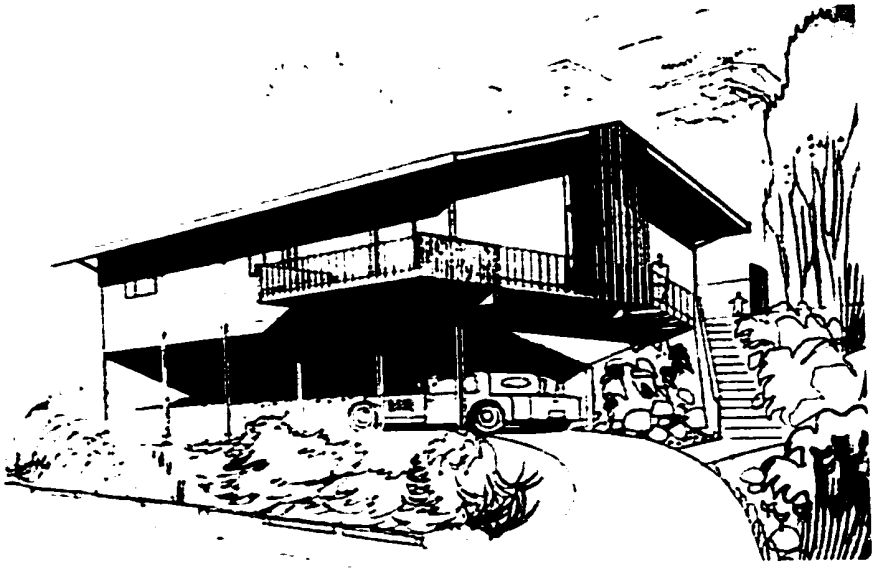

Figures 4-8 and 4-9. Vernon DeMars, plan for Marin City housing projects, Marin City, California, 1958. From DeMars and Reay, *Marin City Redevelopment*.

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public-housing tenants could not wholly integrate them with the mainstream of Bay Area life, especially as inner-city economies declined. The industries which drew the wave of migrants during wartime began disappearing when both Kaiser and Bechtel closed their Bay Area shipyards in 1946. In Richmond the situation worsened when the Ford auto plant moved south to Milpitas in 1956. While Marin City's residents found themselves in poorly-paid menial jobs, the Richmond projects' tenants especially suffered the prolonged effects of a wartime boom town gone bust and never wholly recovered. Endemic poverty and demographic changes worsened Easter Hill Village despite the architects' best intentions. By 1960, Marin City was a poor, black enclave in one of America's richest counties. By 1970, Easter Hill Village, which during the 1950s was integrated and mostly white, was ninety-five percent black, with the overwhelming majority of its residents on public assistance. The once-promising neighborhood had become an area rife with crime, high unemployment, and privations.[49]

While DeMars' projects have become ghettos, they represent more success in public-housing design than failed efforts like St. Louis' infamous Pruitt-Igoe development, a series of densely-populated fourteen-story towers which offered its residents no yards, public spaces, or other amenities which made life there enjoyable.[50] Bay Tradition architecture concerned itself with comfortable, healthy indoor and outdoor living for those who could afford it. DeMars' effort to extend these benefits to the poor did not necessarily improve their lives; the denizens of his projects lacked the elites' means and class background. Though Bay Tradition architects demonstrated a sense of social purpose and a desire to improve the lives of workers, simply giving them attractive buildings did not suffice to enhance their dwellers' conditions.

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ERNEST KUMP AND THE "CALIFORNIA SCHOOL," 1939-1965

In addition to ranch-style houses, the open-plan modular schools of Ernest Kump (1911-1999) became ubiquitous sights in the Bay Area's suburbs. Besides William Wurster, Kump was perhaps most responsible for broadening the Bay Tradition's range and increasing its presence, both within and well beyond the Bay Area, and for further defining Bay Tradition architecture's purpose of enhancing people's lives. Like Wurster, he was a Central Valley native, born in Bakersfield and educated at Berkeley. The son of a Beaux Arts architect, Kump was trained during a time of architectural change at the university. The program there was still a Beaux-Arts stronghold when he entered, yet several of his peers, including Vernon DeMars, noted for his housing projects, became committed modernists. After graduating in 1932, Kump briefly worked for his father, Ernest Senior, in Fresno; but father and son disagreed on the International Style's merits. The quarrel ended with father firing son.

Kump's architectural ideals were similar to Wurster's, though Kump was much less openly regionalist than Wurster (with whom he collaborated on the Carquinez Heights and Chabot Terrace housing projects during the war). Like his senior colleague, he considered California a place blessed with remarkable climate and scenery, but he viewed it less in terms of its influence on comfortable domesticity than in terms of how it could create healthier, more contented citizens. In his self-published 1957 manifesto, *A New Architecture for Man*, Kump articulated this view and explained that democracy depended not only on good government, but on a base of happy citizens who enjoyed the place where they lived, worked, and learned.

Kump claimed that people were inherently sensitive to nature and were compelled to follow its laws, one of which was that simple, harmonious architecture was most desirable.[51] The results, he

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maintained, included "a better and higher quality of space environment for all of Man's social activities . . . [and] raising the standard of living of all peoples in society. . . ."[52] Since Kump's audience was the relatively affluent clientele who supported the Bay Tradition's beliefs and designs, he succeeded where DeMars, the designer of harmonious and attractive projects for the poor, failed.

Forming intermittent partnerships over the next few decades with members of the Falk, Masten and Hurd firm, Kump practiced largely on his own in Palo Alto and distinguished himself as a non-residential architect, with schools as his forte. In 1939, Kump made his name with Acalanes High School in Lafayette (Figure 4-10), then a semi-rural community fifteen miles east of Oakland and still a decade from becoming an affluent suburb. Aiming to build cheaply and attractively, Kump created the expansive school plant, which in the next two decades became legion throughout not only California but most of the nation as well. Acalanes in particular, says architectural historian David Gebhard, is now widely considered "both prototype and pinnacle in the evolution of the one-story, modular, open-plan California High School . . . [which] changed design around the world."[53]

Using Richard Neutra's single-building Bell Avenue School in Los Angeles as a model, Kump created a plan reminiscent of Southern California's International Style, with its plain white stucco surfaces (since painted and tiled), broad bands of windows, slightly slanted roofs, and simple forms. However, the school's originality lies not in the individual buildings' style (which is not itself very remarkable), but in the plant's overall layout and openness to the mild East Bay climate. Acalanes is a complex of detached, rectangular International Style buildings arranged in parallel rows, with well-maintained lawns and plants in between them. Unlike traditional school buildings, which were multi-story, single-building plants with enclosed halls and

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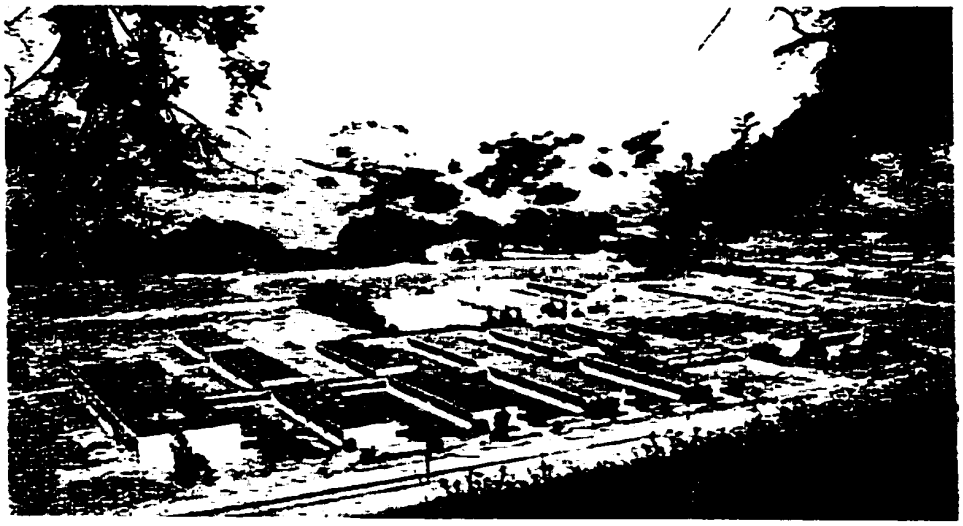

Figure 4-10. Ernest Kump, Acalanes High School, Lafayette, California, 1939-1940. From David Gebhard, Eric Sandweiss, and Robert Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco & Northern California.*

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relatively little landscaping, Kump's plan for Acalanes (and subsequent schools for the next twenty-five years) included covered walkways, ample landscaping, and near-constant contact with the outdoors for students and teachers, who had to venture outside to move between classes. The plan also included ample parking space, since the teachers and many students drove to the then-rural school, as well as open space for expansion, because Kump anticipated eventual growth and knew that building individual classroom wings would be far faster and cheaper than expanding a single main building.

The school was well-received in its time and drew praise for years after its completion in 1940. According to *Architectural Forum*, which did a feature story on the school nine years later, the school's users (teachers and students) were impressed:

> "Every room has a garden," a young history teacher said. The key word, used spontaneously by several persons, was "freedom." Said Superintendent Neil M. Parsons: "The youngsters don't have a feeling of being in prison." Teachers noted that pupils are "happier," less "inhibited" than in many other schools.[54]

The reasons for the design's acceptance vary. The magazine claimed that Bay Area educators were simply more open-minded than their peers elsewhere, adding, "Possibly because California's balmy climate ventilates educators' minds as well as their houses, California schools have been less tradition-bound than most."[55] A possibly more important factor was thrift. Acalanes' construction cost in 1939-40 was a mere $3.72 per square foot, by far the cheapest comparably-sized school built in California at the time.[56]

After World War II, open-plan schools (many of which Kump designed) appeared throughout the region, almost always in newly-developing, middle- and upper-middle-class suburban areas like San Mateo, Marin, and Contra Costa counties. By 1948, Kump's plan was acknowledged nationally as "the California School" and attracted adherents in other regions, especially the Midwest (which had to modify

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it by enclosing walkways, for protection from the harsh winters). The plan's informality and low building cost seems to have attracted praise regardless of the region; Michigan educator Wilfred F. Clapp, writing in *Architectural Record*, considered the open plan safer and healthier than the traditional monolithic school, adding: "We believe that the low-lying, sprawled-out type of building . . . is less awe-inspiring and more friendly in the eyes of the child, though it may not look as good to adults as some of our multi-storied Roman efforts."[57]

While Kump drew inspiration from the International Style, he was far less devoted to it than to his notion of the school as a healthy, pleasing place. Like the Bay Tradition's pioneers, Polk and Maybeck, who drew inspiration from historicist styles but were devoted to none, Kump saw International Style modernism as a starting point, but not an end in itself. After Acalanes, he rarely used the style in his schools, preferring to vary colors, materials, and building forms. Individual buildings were less important in his work than site plans, the creation of total environments rather than clusters of buildings with landscaping added as an afterthought. In this sense, Kump's approach closely resembles that of *Sunset*, which promoted the idea of the home as a total environment suitable for outdoor leisure and relaxed, informal living. Kump applied it to schools, under the premise that learning in an attractive, nature-sensitive atmosphere was as important as living in one.

Perhaps his masterpiece in this regard was the Foothill Junior College campus in Los Altos Hills (Figure 4-11), an affluent community near Palo Alto. When the college opened in temporary facilities in 1958, its trustees wanted it to embrace progressive ideals and meet the challenges of educating the Silicon Valley's future workers; Kump was chosen for its proven ability at campus design. Opened in 1961, the campus, comprised of thirty-six redwood-sided buildings with pitched

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Figure 4-11. Ernest Kump, Foothill Junior College, Los Altos Hills, California, 1961. From website www.clr.utoronto.ca.

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roofs (echoing the nearby mountains) and ample native trees and flora, received accolades for its "Pacific-style" design. Architectural critic Allan Temko deemed it "the most beautiful community college ever built."[58]

With few exceptions, inner-city neighborhoods did not adopt the Kump model wholesale, since his open plans required ample space for the expansive, expandable complexes and were geared toward the automobile. Open-plan schools were also prone to vandalism and theft, since classrooms and students' lockers were easily accessible. In the last decade, this characteristic has caused a reaction against open-plan schools in favor of closed, more secure facilities.[59] At mid-century, though, Kump schools epitomized the California ideal of enjoying the place's tame nature while learning and working. This extended the Bay Tradition's domestic practice into the workplace and was not lost on other architects, especially those designing the region's new white-collar workplaces in what became the Silicon Valley.

COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES

Starting in the 1940s, commercial structures followed the Kump/Wurster model, as Bay Area office buildings became markedly less formal in their designs. Starting in 1932, with Philadelphia's PSFS Building, designed by Swiss immigrant William Lescaze, the International Style had become highly popular among American companies, which seemed to equate the new Bauhaus-based style with efficiency and a modern kind of formality and decorum. Company headquarters over the next three decades moved away from the Art Deco or Beaux-Arts designs of the early twentieth century, and became instead monuments to the Bauhaus, whose glass-and-steel designs were relatively easy to build and conveyed a sleek image. The most notable of these are both in New York: 1952's Lever House (by Skidmore Owings Merrill partner Gordon Bunshaft) and

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Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building, completed in 1958. Both epitomize the impersonal "glass box" architecture maligned by architectural historians Kenneth Frampton and Ian Sutton,[60] as well as by William Wurster, who reacted to Mies' work with unconcealed disgust.[61]

Wurster's sense that architecture should promote personal well-being was already manifested in his domestic designs by the time he created his first important commercial work in 1942. Tapped by the Schuckl Canning Company to design its new headquarters in Sunnyvale, then in the heart of the Santa Clara Valley's vastly rich agricultural region, Wurster aimed to create a "country office building" appropriate to the Bay Area. In doing so, he helped change the face of Bay Area commercial architecture. The Schuckl building (Figure 4-12), like other offices of its time, is essentially an International Style structure with simple rectangular forms, a flat roof, long horizontal bands of windows, and a smooth surface without ornamentation. However, its materials mitigate the building's starkness. It uses redwood siding (northern California's predominant native wood), light-colored trim, and a third-floor sundeck for employees to enjoy the outdoors on breaks. These give the building a warm, informal appearance. Its scale aside, it looks less like a company headquarters and more like the private homes Wurster then designed for clients in Berkeley, San Francisco, and those cities' suburbs, among them the Strauss home in Berkeley, dating from 1939. Also, its informality reflects the growing informality of Bay Area schools, provided around the same time by Ernest Kump.

An anomaly among buildings of its type and era, the Schuckl building is an oddly modest yet comfortable-looking structure, by no means an imposing monument to its owners. The building was unlike other corporate offices of the era, because it conveyed not businesslike formality but an intimacy and relaxed quality then scarcely seen in this type of structure. Company headquarters in smaller communities during

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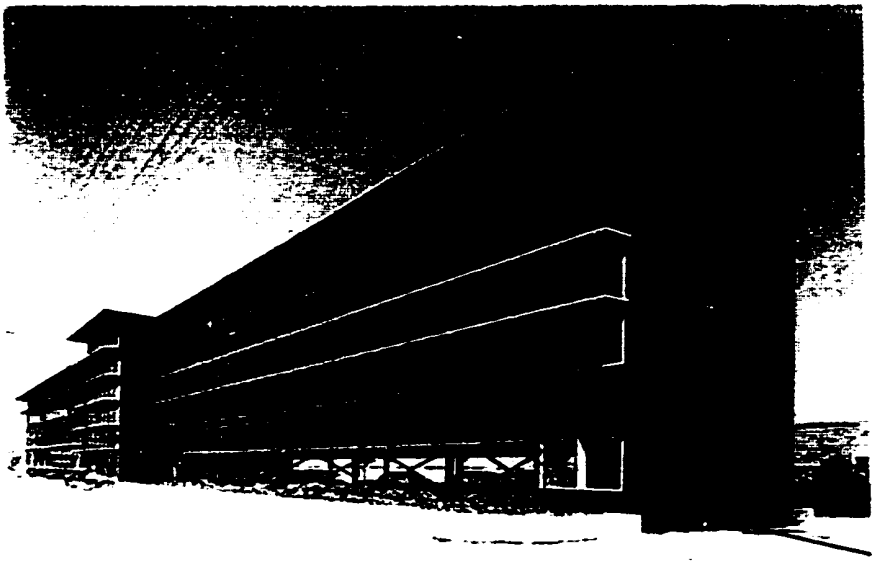

Figure 4-12. William Wurster, Schuckl Canning Company headquarters, Sunnyvale, California, 1942. From Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, *Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Architects*.

Figure 4-13. *La Crosse Tribune* building, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1942. From *Architectural Record*, September 1943.
Figure 4-14. Esso Oil headquarters, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1948. From *Architectural Record*, July 1949.

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the 1940s were generally nothing like the Schuckl headquarters, mainly because they embraced no regional design ideas and represented a more formal, orthodox modernism. For example, the *La Crosse Tribune* building in Wisconsin (Figure 4-13) and the Esso headquarters in Baton Rouge (Figure 4-14) are typically International Style, with the smooth walls, rectilinear forms, and long bands of windows which distinguish that idiom. Such buildings conveyed a sense of modernity, efficiency, and businesslike decorum.[62] With the Schuckl building, though, Wurster presents an updated version of California's redwood vernacular architecture, fusing the pastoral and the modern to produce a markedly informal workplace for the time.

Wurster's subsequent office and workplace commissions, also used redwood prominently but added lush landscaping, usually by landscape architect Thomas D. Church. Often, they looked less institutional than residential. Indeed, he believed that setting depended only partly on architecture. Writing in the *Magazine of Art* in 1944, Wurster commented, " . . . the physical character of the Bay area is probably more a matter of slope, fog, sun, wind, and water, than of buildings per se. A distinguished spot in [the region] is primarily a matter of view and climate," and added, "Architecture is still too often thought of as including only buildings, and only for certain types of use. But fortunately our lives are limited by no such definition."[63]

Wurster did not believe in making his non-residential buildings substantially different in form or feeling from his houses. This characteristic is central to Bay Tradition architecture, which reflects the idea that homes should encourage physical and mental well-being, reflect the natural surroundings, and blur the line between domestic and public architecture. It is clearly manifested in the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences (Figures 4-15 and 4-16), designed by Wurster for Stanford University and built in 1954. A

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Figures 4-15 and 4-16. Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Center For Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, 1954. From website www.blach.com.

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research center which would host scholars for terms of one year, the Center hardly resembles a traditional academic building, and arguably looks more like a house or even *Sunset*'s nearby headquarters. A group of single-story redwood buildings with ample windows, joined by covered walkways and surrounded with ample lawns and native redwood and cypress trees, the complex presents a relaxed appearance, suiting its intent as "a projected oasis . . . [which would] give the scholars the freedom from pressure necessary for concentrated thought about man's behavior."[64] It must have fulfilled its purpose, because in 1955, along with the Schuckl building, it was cited as a model workplace by *Management Methods* magazine.[65]

Indeed, making buildings more modest, as Wurster did, was something of a Bay Tradition hallmark. Informality meant not only using more approachable, even homey-looking materials like redwood, but also aiming for informality and comfortable scale rather than Beaux-Arts size and splendor. Kump aimed for a practicality and simplicity, "beheading that sacred cow of school boards - the idea that the structure should be a big, imposing edifice denoting solid virtue and civic pride."[66] In addition, they suited what became, in the region's high-tech industries, an informal work climate attuned to its workers' well-being.

The notion that non-residential buildings, especially corporate headquarters or research and development facilities, should be modest and blend into the suburban environment in which their employees live, is also the underlying premise behind the business park. Wurster's and Kump's ideas contributed mightily to its creation and helped influence its basic design. The idea of locating company headquarters on grassy, campus-like expanses did not originate with the Stanford Industrial Park, which some (like John Findlay) credit with being the first such facility.[67] The concept of a campus-like industrial workplace did not originate in California. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, General

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Electric moved both its lighting and electronics laboratories to suburban campuses outside Syracuse, New York. However, the GE facilities looked little like the Stanford Industrial Park; they had tall, highly visible smokestacks and high-voltage coils, used very little planting around their headquarters beyond grass, and did not conceal the parking lots from public view.[68]

The Stanford Industrial Park (Figures 4-17 and 4-18), created in 1951 to generate revenue for nearby Stanford University, not only brought the white-collar industrial workplace to the suburbs, but also blended as unobtrusively as possible with the suburban setting. The firm of Skidmore Owings Merrill and landscape architect Thomas D. Church, who frequently collaborated with Wurster, created a master plan mandating low-rise buildings without smokestacks, lushly-planted campus-like spaces for each client, and hidden parking lots. Shortly after its opening (with Varian Associates, an electronics firm, as its first tenant), the park drew favorable attention from *Business Week*, which called the facility "an ideal balance of tidy smokeless-type plants, housing, and general community development; the university wanted only suitable neighbors."[69] A few years later, the *Saturday Evening Post* concurred, commenting that the rigid building restrictions "have proved attractive to prospective tenants. For one thing, a company knows in advance that it will have pleasant neighbors," and added that it "has the appearance of a park-apartment development. Few homeowners work more diligently to outdo their neighbors' landscaping than these industrial tenants."[70]

In *Magic Lands*, John Findlay claims that the Stanford Industrial Park was an effort to reinvent aspects of the American city by offering an urban workplace without urban ugliness. He adds that the business park represents uniquely Western efforts to recreate urban forms, but he never mentions the local architectural idioms and attitudes which guided

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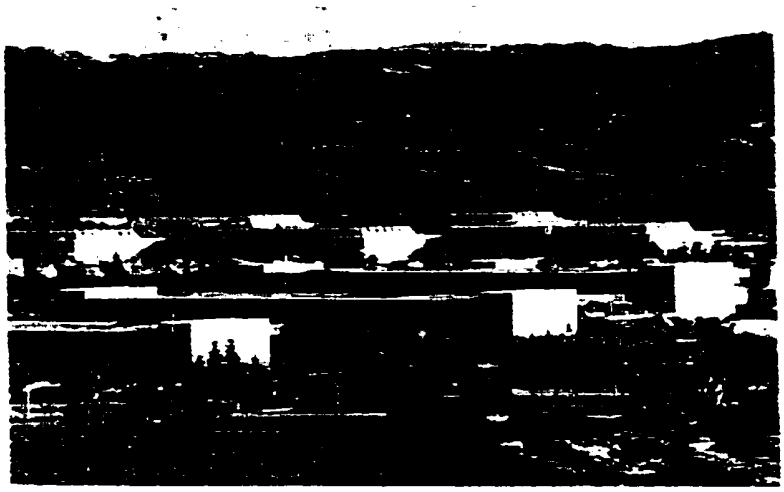

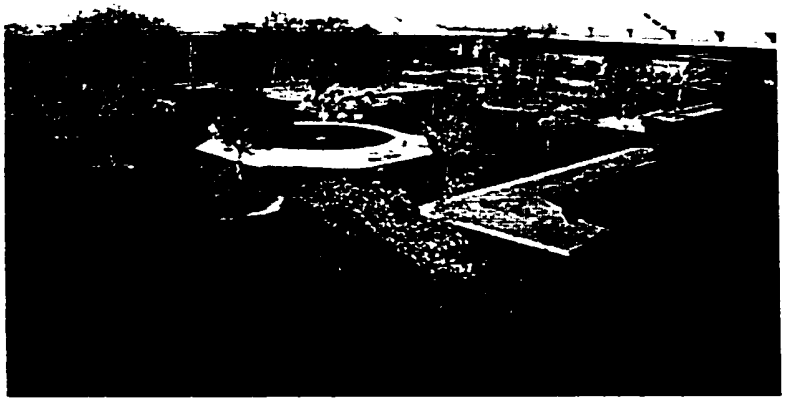

Figure 4-17. Stanford Industrial Park, Palo Alto, California, 1953.
Figure 4-18. Eric Mendelson and Michael Gallis, Varian Associates Headquarters (now Hewlett-Packard), Stanford Industrial Park, 1953. Both from John Findlay, *Magic Lands*.

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Wurster, Church, and other architects and landscape designers in the region.[71] The Stanford Industrial Park is clearly connected to the Bay Tradition, bringing to a corporate workplace the attributes that Bay Tradition homes had from the idiom's beginning and that the region's schools had with the advent of Ernest Kump.

Architects of the Bay Tradition throughout the early and middle twentieth century created wooded, pleasing middle-class neighborhoods free from visual chaos, best manifested in the Bay Area's postwar suburbs. Affluent areas like Palo Alto boasted woodsy, modernist Eichler homes and well-landscaped, open-plan schools by Ernest Kump, which embraced informal yet efficient designs and encouraged at least some contact with the outdoors. On the same note, the industrial park aimed to bring the white-collar workplace into suburbia without detracting from the verdant, low-rise suburban landscape. Through careful planning, restrictions on design, and emphasis on the "natural," the Stanford Industrial Park's creators created a working landscape on distinctly Bay Area terms, which entailed a relaxed lifestyle augmented by close contact with a clement form of nature, as little difference as possible between domestic and commercial landscapes, an emphasis on unobtrusive development that subordinated itself to the natural setting.

By the 1960s, the Bay Tradition had broadened to include a variety of building types, making itself more visible throughout the region than it had been before World War II. In domestic, commercial, and institutional buildings alike, it spread the notion of relaxed, informal living and working, helping shape the larger "California lifestyle" that filled the pages of *Sunset* in the postwar era. However, the Bay Area was already grappling with the problem of uncontrolled growth, which contributed to the ugliness that Torben Strandgaard and James Benét cited in the early 1960s. The dramatic rise in population and the tendency toward low-rise, low-density development meant that the

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vaunted, semi-pastoral Bay Area landscape was rapidly disappearing. To a growing number of people in the San Francisco region, the best way to preserve the region's natural features and scenery was not to create more architecture that evoked the landscape, but to create as little as possible.

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[1]James N. Gregory, *American Exodus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 251.

[2]The phrase "Western living," while never explicitly defined, is basically the magazine's mantra throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

[3]William W. Wurster, "San Francisco Bay Portfolio," *Magazine of Art* 37:8 (December 1944), 303.

[4]L. W. Lane, "*Sunset* Magazine has a new home in the country," *Sunset* 107:2 (August 1951), 29.

[5]Anonymous, "Remodeled: the story of Western living," Sunset 104:4 (April 1950), 40.

[6]Anonymous, "For more outdoor living - the roofless room," *Sunset* 104:4 (April 1950), 50.

[7]Anonymous, "The growing importance of the garden in Western living," *Sunset* 106:2 (February 1951), 27.

[8]Anonymous, "A critical look at the changing Western house," *Sunset* 116:5 (May 1956), 75.

[9]Anonymous, "13 award-winning Western homes," *Sunset* 116:6 (June 1956), 95.

[10]Carolyn S. Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 2-5.

[11]Loeb, 9-10.

[12]Loeb, 90-94.

[13]Loeb, 103.

[14]Loeb, 99.

[15]Jerry Ditto, *Eichler Homes* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1995), 41-45.

[16]Ditto, 8.

[17]Ditto, 56-59.

[18]Edward P. Eichler, *Race and Housing* (Santa Barbara: Fund for the Republic, 1964), 3-22.

[19]Ditto, 83.

[20]Ditto, 27.

[21]James E. Vance, Jr., *Geography and Urban Evolution in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, 1964), 63-65.

[22]San Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: the Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[23]Richard Walker, "Industry Builds the City: the Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27:1 (2001), 36.

[24]Greg Hise, "Home Building and Industrial Decentralization in Los Angeles: The Roots of the Postwar Urban Region," *Journal of Urban History* 19:2 (February 1993), 95-125.

[25]Walker, 37-46.

[26]Walker, 48-49.

[27]Vance, 65-66.

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[28]Eichler, 3.

[29]Marilynn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 215.

[30]Brookfield Village was an anomaly in the east Oakland flatlands - an oasis of winding streets and modest family homes in a large expanse of linear street grids and aging bungalows. Since 1960, this has mattered little demographically and the area has become one of east Oakland's worst slums.

[31]Anonymous, "Big Dave Bohannon, Operative Builder by the California Method," *Fortune* 33:4 (April 1946), 147.

[32]"Big Dave Bohannon," 145, 147, 199.

[33]"Big Dave Bohannon," 194.

[34]Malvina Reynolds, *Little Boxes and Other Handmade Songs* (New York: Oak Publications, 1964), 94.

[35]Torben Strandgaard, "The Bay Area Environment: Mess and Mediocrity," *California Monthly* 76:2 (November 1965), 11.

[36]Strandgaard, 10.

[37]James Benét, *A Guide to San Francisco and the Bay Region* (New York: Random House, 1963), 392.

[38]Benét, 405-406.

[39]Benét, 393.

[40]Gregory, *American Exodus*, 251.

[41]Clare Cooper Marcus, *Easter Hill Village* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 8.

[42]Marcus, 4.

[43]Marcus, 3.

[44]Paul Heyer, *Architects on Architecture* (New York: Walker and Company, 1966), 96.

[45]Marcus, 4.

[46]Charles Wollenberg, *Marinship at War* (Berkeley: Western Heritage Press, 1990), 85-86.

[47]DeMars and Reay, *Marin City Redevelopment* (Los Angeles: California Development Company, 1958), 3-4.

[48]Emerson Goble, "Mediocrity by Fiat," *Architectural Record* 132 (October 1962), 9.

[49]Marcus, 27.

[50]Pruitt-Igoe was demolished in 1972, after seventeen years of high crime, low occupancy, and tenants' discontent with both its deterioration and unlivable design.

[51]Ernest J. Kump, *A New Architecture for Man* (Palo Alto: Ernest J. Kump, 1957), 11.

[52]Kump, 24-25.

[53]David Gebhard, Eric Sandweiss, and Robert Winter, *Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1985), 247.

[54]Anonymous, "Pioneer School," *Architectural Forum* (October 1949), 106.

[55]"Pioneer School," 104.

[56]"Pioneer School," 106.

[57]Wilfred F. Clapp, "What We Like About One Room Schools," *Architectural Record* 103:3 (March 1948), 119.

[58]Linda Taaffe, "Foothill thriving at age 40," *Los Altos Town Crier* (22 October 1997), 1.

[59]An example is Martinez's Alhambra High School, which in the mid-1990s demolished its Kump-designed, 1950s-era campus and replaced it with a modernized version of the original 1900-vintage Spanish Revival

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building. The new closed plan makes it less vulnerable to theft and vandalism.

[60]Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 280-298; Sutton, 361.

[61]Young, n.p.

[62]Anonymous, "Esso Office Building, Baton Rouge," *Architectural Record* 109:1 (January 1951), 85-89.

[63]Wurster, "San Francisco Bay Portfolio," 301, 303.

[64]Anonymous, "The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences," *Arts and Architecture* 72:2 (February 1955), 14.

[65]Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, *Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Inc., Architects* (San Francisco: 1967), n.p.

[66]"Pioneer School," 104.

[67]John Findlay, *Magic Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 117-129.

[68]Anonymous, "Electronics Park, Syracuse, New York," *Architectural Record* 105:2 (February 1949), 96-103.

[69]Anonymous, "Land-Poor Stanford Opens Its Acres on 99-Year Leases," *Business Week* (20 December 1952), 136.

[70]Falcon O. Baker, "City on the Campus," *Saturday Evening Post* 228:27 (31 December 1955), 73.

[71]Findlay, 129-138.

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CHAPTER FIVE: "COMMON GROUNDS: THE BAY TRADITION COMPARED TO OTHER MODERNISMS"

By the early 1960s, the Bay Tradition had reached the peak of its visibility, manifesting in commercial and educational buildings as well as homes. However, it also became less relevant and fell apart as a coherent movement. In part this is because it fell out of fashion among architects, who became more experimental and turned away from the stark International Style and toward postmodernism, which reintroduced the use of historicist elements and used them in an even more eclectic manner than early Bay Tradition figures like Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck had. Also, the region's architects did not unanimously share its vision, especially its penchant for informal, nature-evoking modern architecture. Architects like Charles Moore had begun tiring of the Bay Tradition, calling for a return to eclecticism as a means of reckoning with the Bay Area's growing urban problems, like sprawl and ugliness, which the Bay Tradition had tried and failed to remedy.

In addition, style meant little to blue-collar Bay Area residents, many of whom could not afford to live in Bay Tradition homes, even the Eichler tract houses. Before 1925, the region's working classes tended to settle into densely packed urban bungalows, and after World War II they tended toward ranch-style suburban homes. Not every Bay Area community set forth the requirements that the Hillside Club did in 1904, when they lobbied city officials to put density and planting requirements in place in northeast Berkeley. San Jose, where the Bay Tradition had never really been prominent, pursued rapid, expansive growth in the 1950s and 1960s at the urging of local business leaders and the *San Jose Mercury News*. That city exemplified the sprawl that characterized Bay Area suburban areas like Santa Clara and Contra Costa counties, parts of which filled with homogeneous tract housing and automobile-oriented shopping centers.

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The advent of Charles Moore, who created its last great work, also heralded its demise. Michigan-born and Princeton-educated, Moore moved to the Bay Area in the 1950s and briefly worked for Gardner Dailey, a Bay Tradition architect whose works closely resemble those of William Wurster. Moore declared the Bay Tradition passé in a 1958 lecture, praising it yet also warning that its relevance was ending:

> The West Coast architect has behind him a tradition which includes some of the pleasantest houses in the world. But he cannot any more create his buildings on a feeling for that tradition alone. He is faced with choices among other manners and other accomplishments, if he is to do his best with his materials and for his changing environment. Like it or not, he is an eclectic.[1]

The eclecticism to which Moore referred was more than a matter of mere style; he looked to the past for answers to urban problems and did not see the Bay Tradition's "sylvan city" as a solution. It did not solve the problems of urban sprawl, since the communities surrounding Bay Tradition neighborhoods did not follow its examples. In addition, Moore came to find the idiom boring and gradually turned toward what became known as "postmodernism," which reconciles historical styles and forms with modern technology and shuns the severe starkness exemplified by Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier.[2]

Moore designed the Bay Tradition's last major development, Sea Ranch (Figure 5-1), in 1965. A collection of vacation homes and condominiums sparsely scattered on a former sheep ranch in northwestern Sonoma County, Sea Ranch bears a slight resemblance to nearby Fort Ross, a former Russian outpost dating from 1812. Moore claimed:

> At the Sea Ranch . . . our concern was to harmonize with the magnificent landscape, not to dominate or hide in it, but to appear as a congenial partner. We were delighted when someone said [Moore's own house there] looked like a large wooden rock at home on its bluff.[3]

As did the Bay Tradition architects, Moore aimed to harmonize the development as much as possible with the natural surroundings. In addition, he looked to one aspect of the Bay Area's past (using Fort

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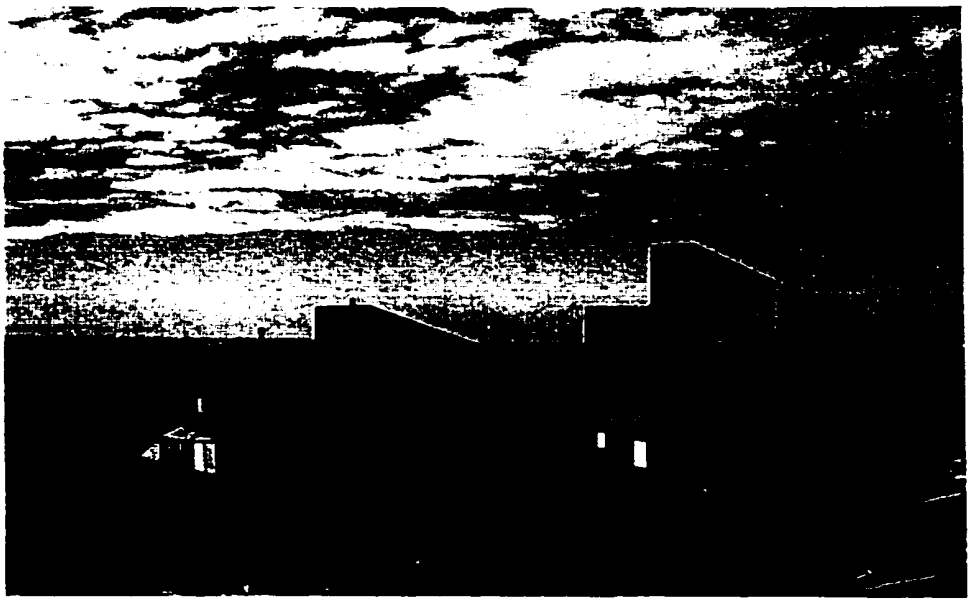

Figure 5-1. Charles Moore, Sea Ranch condomimiums (first phase), Sonoma County, California, 1965. From website www.greatbuildings.com.

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Ross as a model) and to the initial stage of the Bay Tradition's efforts to create the ideal urban environment. His approach is almost "anti-architecture," since it aims to be unobtrusive and almost styleless. In this sense, he echoes Kump's and Wurster's efforts to avoid monumentality and to create harmony between nature. In the 1960s, this subtle rejection of the built landscape led some in the Bay Area to rethink development altogether.

By the mid-1960s, it seemed to some residents of the Bay Area's outlying, less developed communities that the best way to preserve the Bay Area's scenery and landscapes was not to build more attractively, but to build as little as possible. Environmental activism gained new momentum by that time, rallying for greenbelts and open spaces in the region's hills and along the bay and ocean shorelines. Among this movement's major victories was the defeat of Marincello, a proposed "new town" west of the Golden Gate Bridge on the Marin headlands. Not simply a housing tract, Marincello would have been an entire community of 25,000 residents living in fifth sixteen-story apartment towers and working at planned light-industrial developments planned for the town. A citizens' committee formed in 1964 to fight the project, drawing support from figures like photographer Ansel Adams (but, not surprisingly, no major Bay Area architects), and it successfully convinced Marin County's supervisors to block the development and keep the Marin headlands empty and undeveloped. To justify their cause, the Committee to Save the Golden Gate commented on the headlands' physical beauty:

> Beauty is not, as many unthinking persons say, the concern of the weak and impractical. Truly seen, the beautiful is the strong, the healthy, the life-abetting. . . . It is possible to grant that many California hills have been more or less successfully built upon, sometimes with towers, and that the resulting communities have been part of our State's fabled way of life. But it is still a stubborn fact that the hills near the Golden Gate would be the wrong place to do it.[4]

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Decades earlier, those same sentiments were used to explain and promote Bay Tradition architecture. In the 1960s, with the Bay Area being rapidly overbuilt and its pastoral scenery vanishing, the same appreciation that helped spawn the Bay Tradition was being used to halt the spread of yet more buildings.

Though the Bay Tradition fell out of fashion by 1970, it did not entirely die out. Ernest Kump's schools continued to be copied throughout California and beyond, appearing as far afield as Michigan and Illinois, where they were not necessarily suited to the harsh winter climate but were inexpensive to build and easy to expand. In the Bay Area, more affluent bedroom communities such as Danville, Lafayette, and Piedmont have downtowns which, with their abundant trees and low-rise buildings that closely resemble houses, attesting to the continuing influence of Bay Tradition architects like William Wurster. Also, the business park was a Bay Area innovation, fitting the white-collar industrial workplace into its suburban landscape. Like Ernest Kump's schools, it has multiplied within the region and spread afar, becoming a common form in the United States and beyond and attesting to the Bay Tradition's influence.

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In addition to its status as a regionalist expression, the Bay Tradition is relevant in a larger cultural context because of its connections to three similar modernisms. The bungalow represented a similar effort to balance urban development with natural-looking domestic architecture, much as the Bay Tradition's early practitioners had tried to accomplish. The California bungalow was inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, as were the Bay Tradition and Scandinavian modernism. It aimed to evoke the antimodern in its use of materials, but because bungalows were interpreted in California as cheap worker housing, they were densely built and did not express more "natural"

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cities, instead contributing to sprawl and urban crowding. The Prairie style was not antimodern because it did not directly pay homage to a regional or architectural past, but it merits attention because it was a well-known regional style which asserted regional identity by evoking the surrounding landscape. Scandinavian modernism comes much closer to the Bay Tradition in its evolution and accommodation of the International Style. Beginning in the late nineteenth century under the rubric of "National Romanticism," the architecture of Norway, Sweden, and Finland used imported historicist styles but rendered them in native wood and stone to evoke Scandinavia's rugged landscapes. With the International Style's advent, Scandinavian modernism operated on terms similar to the Bay Tradition, adopting simple rectilinear forms but using native materials to evoke not machine-like anonymity, but architectural simplicity and deep attachment to place.

Examining these styles is relevant to the Bay Tradition because all three were its contemporaries and share key aspects of its relationship with both modernism and the physical landscape. Each reacted to industrialization and capitalism by proposing alternatives to the new urban landscape, and each embarked on a sort of mission devoted to healthy, aesthetically pleasing architecture. All three used native materials to evoke a sense of nature and a close relationship between architecture and natural landscapes. Comparing their histories reveal markedly similar influences, reactions to the modern city, and efforts to connect the affluent with a domesticated "nature." In addition, these antimodern regionalisms tried to make the city a healthier place though nature-evoking architecture. Indeed, the Bay Tradition was part of a broad antimodernist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In northern California, its proponents tried to preserve the Bay Area's pastoral scenery and clement nature in the face

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of overdevelopment, which seemed to obscure what the region meant to those who appreciated it.

THE "CALIFORNIA" BUNGALOW

Since their appearance en masse in southern California around 1900, bungalows have been celebrated for their casual appearance and ability to encourage relaxed, "open-air" living. In the words of geographer Karen Cobos, bungalows gave "common place people . . . a tangible symbol of Eden."[5] Much like the Bay Tradition, they were strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and were an antimodern expression made possible by urban industrial life, against which both styles reacted. They differed because the bungalow was not created as a specific regional style, and its credentials as a regionalist style rest less on its efforts to express the native landscape than on its sheer numbers, its suitability to the mild climate, and its well-timed debut.

The bungalow was actually a series of forms that went through several phases of appropriation and reinvention on its journey from India to Britain and ultimately to California. According to architectural historian Anthony King, it was less a type of house than a manifestation of antimodern sentiment that evoked not only nature but also the notion of a simple, "peasant" past and the promise of authentic, healthy living.[6] Deriving its name from the native word for "Bengali," the bungalow originated in the Bengal region of India, where it was mentioned by Western observers as early as the middle of the seventeenth century.

The original bungalow was actually called a "chauyari," a pitched-roofed, pavilion-like hut; the poor usually had one per family, while the rich often had clusters of them in small compounds. The ruling British liked its airy, simple design and ease to build. By 1850

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they borrowed the form, named it for its Indian place of origin, and made it popular housing for army officers who. British residents of Bengal modified the form, enlarging it and adding familiar amenities and design elements, making their bungalows more like informal English cottages suited for the tropics. King states that this new version of the bungalow came to signify not a regional style but a racial one, specifically a white home in rural or suburban areas.[7]

The form's suburban identity was underscored when it first appeared in England in 1869, as a cluster of seaside leisure homes in Westgate, Kent. Soon, the Arts and Crafts movement championed the bungalow for its "peasant" origins. Smaller and less ornate than traditional English cottages, which were often two stories to the bungalow's one, bungalows embodied an architectural simplicity than was rare in Victorian England. To its mostly affluent aficionados, the bungalow "seemed to represent something which had been lost in England, increasingly industrialized and urban, and offering an opportunity to escape from social changes which some people were beginning to deplore."[8]

According to King, bungalows differed from cottages in that the former were products of capitalist modernity, since the British bourgeoisie had adopted them: "Cottage has its original referents in feudalism, just as bungalow has its referents in capitalism."[9] Its status as a signifier of the rural, the simplified, and the natural is markedly similar to that of Bay Tradition architecture, which also derived its early inspiration from the Arts and Crafts vision of a simple yet cultivated life.

Reaching the United States by the mid-1880s, the bungalow became popular by 1905, during the height of the "nature craze" described by Peter Schmitt. It was built by the thousands throughout the United States, particularly in California. Because bungalows were relatively

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cheap to build, vast tracts of them covered the southern California landscape between 1900 and 1930, many prefabricated in local factories and shipped to their respective sites. Bungalow designers and manufacturers proliferated in the region, especially the California Ready Cut Company, which sold over 40,000 bungalow kits before it closed in 1940.[10]

Architectural historian Paul Duchscherer claims that the bungalow's identification with California derives from the fact that their appearance there coincided with Los Angeles' immense growth early in the twentieth century. Many new arrivals, Duchscherer maintains, were "do-it-yourselfers" of limited means, aiming to buy suburban lots in new tracts and either to build their own houses or to have professionals do the work.[11] For people of modest means, the price of a bungalow (from as little as $500) was an added incentive;[12] little wonder, then, that bungalows were the preferred housing form in working-class areas of California's larger cities.

While the bungalow was not native to California, it came to embody the state (and especially its southern coastal regions) for a variety of factors, both cultural and coincidental. The form was welcomed partly because the Arts and Crafts movement had a particularly strong following in California, and because both the bungalow and California itself seemed to signify freedom, a theme reiterated decades later by William Wurster and Ernest Kump. According to art historian Richard Guy Wilson:

> Always a place where life appeared to lie easy, California had evolved . . . [into a] land of health, with the possibility of regeneration, [where] a new life could be made. . . . Here the shackles could be broken, and life could be lived as one wanted - primitive and free, urban and bohemian, or safely suburban and domesticated.[13]

Wilson maintains that the bungalow was not only part of a middle landscape, but also a sort of middle ground between the refined and the

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real, embracing a tasteful kind of simplicity that evoked robust health, if not actually bestowing it.

Many bungalows did not necessarily adhere to Arts and Crafts design standards. They often used applied decor rather than letting the materials express themselves. Indeed, the ordinary urban bungalow represents a sort of "trickle-down" of what was in America a more affluent style. Says art historian Cheryl Robertson:

> [The Arts and Crafts movement] reached its full flowering in the relatively unbesmirched soil of California. By putting matters of the soul, spirit, and mind at the forefront, California pilgrims might avoid the deleterious effects of avaricious capitalism . . . which made the home not a family hearth but an overstuffed furniture warehouse.[14]

Contemporary articles and promotional literature about the bungalow offer some insights as to how the style embodied southern California living. Often, the authors praised bungalows' "natural" use of materials as somehow more genuine than its Victorian predecessors, and thus better for its dwellers. Writing in *The Craftsman* in 1910, editor Helen Lukens Gaut hailed the California bungalow for its refined yet rustic aesthetics:

> As the house itself almost always has more than a flavor of the primitive in its design and construction, and the surroundings have not yet lost the ruggedness that belongs to a comparatively new country where everything is on a large scale, it follows that the materials used for building show for the most part a rugged character that contrasts sharply with the neatly groomed spick-and-span houses of the small town or suburb in the East.[15]

Bungalows frequently cultivated a rugged, unfinished look through various means, particularly by using rough shingles or stones, or by leaving some structural members deliberately exposed. The crowning example of the type, the Gamble house in Pasadena, built in 1909 by brothers Henry and Charles Greene, was a large home with an unpainted redwood-shingled surface and beams projecting a foot farther out than the roof itself. Resembling a large hunting lodge more than a conventional residence, it was the masterwork of California's Arts and

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Crafts architecture, much like the ostentatious Carson house in Eureka was among Italianates and Queen Annes. A good, numerous, and considerably more modest Bay Area example is a north Oakland bungalow dating from roughly 1920 (Figure 5-2), which exposes the wooden piers supporting the porch and the roof beams projecting about a foot beyond the roof. This house is built almost wholly of wood and features a façade of narrow horizontal planks. However, a bungalow did not necessarily need to be shingled, since many were stucco-sided as well (Figure 5-3).

Like Bay Tradition homes at every stage, the bungalow seemed conducive to healthy, "open-air" living, which basically entailed letting in fresh air and sunlight, spending time on the broad front porch, or sleeping on "sleeping porches." In 1912, journalist Charles Byers wrote in *The Craftsman* that the bungalow, with its provisions for sleeping porches and other interpenetrations of indoor and outdoor space, represented a kind of liberation:

> Less than a decade ago a house built with a sleeping porch or planned for the slightest opportunity for outdoor living was a most unusual thing in any part of the United States. . . . When once the delights of outdoor sleeping (with its healthfulness, which follows as a matter of course) have been tried, it is hard to understand why so many of us have been willing to live for so long a time in the shut-up stuffy houses that have been our homes for so many years.[16]

The E. W. Stillwell Company, one of Los Angeles' main bungalow manufacturers, claimed in a promotional book published circa 1915: "Sunshine is both a germicide and nerve tonic, so the large window area which is so characteristic of California homes is equally desirable in other climates."[17] While the unnamed author also erroneously claims that the bungalow is a California invention, he does correctly hint at why it caught on in southern California - it happened to suit the sunny, warm climate and offered just enough shelter for its dwellers.

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Figure 5-2. Bungalow, north Oakland, circa 1920.
Figure 5-3. Bungalow block, Sterling Avenue, Alameda, California, circa 1915. Both from Duchscherer, *The Bungalow*.

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Bay Tradition proponent Charles Keeler concurred with these views, saying around 1910 that "California architecture must be life-serving, must make some sort of an anti-industrial gesture, and must conserve values of intimacy, harmony, and health."[18] Furthermore, Keeler also thought bungalows should contribute to one's mental health, thus anticipating Ernest Kump's ideas about schools by four decades. According to Kevin Starr:

> [Keeler] advised bungalow builders to favor warm tones such as buff, brown, red, deep blue, and rich green. Psychologically, Keeler asserted, such colors acted as a reinforcement of the sort of consciously aesthetic life Californians should pursue.[19]

Indeed, the bungalow's regional appeal lay less in how it expressed its landscape than in how it suited its climate. By contrast, the Bay Tradition aimed to express the natural surroundings by looking as organic as possible, avoiding the mass-produced appearance that many bungalows revealed.

Though the Bay Tradition shared key traits with bungalows, and some Bay Tradition architects dubbed their homes, the latter's orientation toward the masses is one of its chief differences from the Bay Tradition. Individualism was a powerful selling point for bungalows in California. Builders promoted them not as tract homes but as expressions of their dwellers' identity, and journalists considered their eclectic appearances indicators of the owners' personalities and quirks. Often, however, these consisted of superficially distinctive porch configurations and facades. One bungalow, for example, would have a Swiss chalet-style or Tudor facade, while its neighbors would have Asian or Mediterranean elements.

Anthony King claims that the bungalow "was instrumental in the development of the modern mass suburb,"[20] placing the California bungalow in the realm of tract housing. By contrast, the Bay Tradition aimed to look more rustic than mass-produced, and manifested in tract-

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house form only as Eichler houses in the 1950s. Bungalows proliferated in urban areas near large factories, where they occupied small urban lots and formed dense neighborhoods with little sylvan about them. While historian Kevin Starr considers the Bay Tradition and bungalow similar, he maintains that they differed in terms of how they expressed regionalism. The former, he claims, "emphasized localism, naturalism, and simplicity," using organic elements to express the Bay Area's physical environment.[21]

Paradoxically, despite their predominance as a mass-built form by the 1910s, bungalow builders used individualism as a strong selling point. King writes: "From the start, California seemed to attract a self-selected population - the innovative, creative, entrepreneurial and democratic. More easygoing than their countrymen in the east, the new Californians were less formal and perhaps more idealistic."[22] Helen Lukens Gaut called the bungalow "daringly individual," while Charles Byers claimed, "The bungalow, as has been stated in THE CRAFTSMAN, probably surpasses all other styles of architecture in its adaptability to individuality." In the Stillwell Company's promotional book, the anonymous author commented, "It has all the good parts of the old cottage and many advantages never dreamed of before. There are endless variations in design. How to have 'something different' is no problem at all." Another bungalow builder, Henry Wilson, dubbed himself "a designer of artistic homes," and implied a kind of bohemianism among his clients.[23]

Bungalows fit one facet of the California architectural canon because they suited the climate and express the casualness and healthfulness of the region. Bay Tradition homes aimed to do the same thing, but the two styles differ in terms of what kind of environment they sought to express. Bay Tradition architects aimed in their designs to "sylvanize" urban areas and rarely built tract homes, especially

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before World War II. Also, the bungalow was in ways an accidental regionalism; it was not created by or for Californians, but it happened to suit California's climate, thus assuring its popularity there. The Bay Tradition emphasized localism and was driven by architects who clearly expressed (in design and writing) their attachment to the Bay Area. Starr claims that the bungalow emphasized its simplicity without an overt attachment to place.[24]

Besides the mass orientation and lack of specific attachment to place, bungalows also differed from Bay Tradition homes in their landscaping. Bungalows did not sylvanize the urban landscape as the Bay Tradition aimed to do, mainly because bungalow-heavy subdivisions of the 1910s and 1920s tended to grow near industrial centers, especially in California. Somewhat ironically, their proliferation contributed to the crowded urban landscapes they had been conceived to counter, providing urban housing and not pastoral retreats.

Urban geographer Richard Walker considers bungalows conducive to urban and suburban sprawl.[25] In his study of the Bay Area's industrial landscape, Walker claims that, "industrial dispersal had created the sprawling form of the American metropolis. Neither change in transport modes nor residential suburbanization is primarily responsible for shaping the outward spiral of urbanization."[26] In the Bay Area, manufacturers moved out of San Francisco to the Peninsula and especially the East Bay to take advantage of cheap, abundant land and proximity to railroad lines. Oakland and Berkeley received most of these relocated factories, as well as numerous new ones. This development resulted in rapid urban growth along the bayshore and especially Oakland's eastern flatlands, which consisted of farms and empty fields before 1900.[27]

These employers in turn drove housing construction in Oakland, particularly bungalows, which were relatively small, cheap to build, and well-suited to the climate. For example, when Chevrolet opened a plant

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at the corner of 73rd Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in 1916, it spawned a housing boom, with one bungalow subdivision, Melrose Highlands, built specifically for Chevrolet employees.[28] A similar trend existed in Los Angeles, where industrial dispersal drove suburban sprawl in the early and middle twentieth century.[29] Just as Chevrolet had spawned its own subdivision in east Oakland, aerospace companies like Lockheed and Douglas caused Westchester's and Westside Village's creation, while Kaiser plants drove Monterey Park's development.[30] In both metropolitan areas, the bungalow did not provide a retreat into the country, but replaced the countryside with residential landscapes attached to large industries.

The California bungalow was a bit like William Wurster's homes of the 1930s and 1940s, although smaller and much cheaper to build, because neither bungalows nor Wurster's houses were intended to be monumental or long-lasting. Instead, they were planned to be comfortable, informal, and impermanent. Because many were built during southern California's land boom, they were built rather quickly on small lots in neighborhoods which became dense, urban, and often little planted. Furthermore, bungalows were generally intended to be "starter homes" for working- and middle-class homebuyers, who (according to historian Alan Gowans) would often leave bungalows behind as their incomes and families grew: "Its first turn-of-the-century builders and/or owners thought of it not so much as permanent as a start on the way to something larger and better."[31] Bungalows thus tended to be symptoms of urban sprawl rather than its solution.

The bungalow appealed to a different part of the California experience than simply a close affinity for nature. It was a signifier of a somewhat bohemian and independent-minded lifestyle, at least in theory. Besides being cheap and plentiful, bungalows attested to some of the traits to which Bay Tradition appealed. Also, it aimed to

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express the perceived healthiness and informality of California living. However, in its execution, the form represented only affordable housing for the working class and did not offer a better kind of residential landscape, as the Bay Tradition aimed to do throughout the early twentieth century. In a sense, bungalow landscapes in California were the forerunners of tracts like San Lorenzo, which became popular among working people because of their affordability. The Bay Tradition aimed to naturalize the urban landscape and fuse machine and garden, succeeding to a degree that the bungalow did not.

THE PRAIRIE STYLE: A MIRROR OF THE SOUL

Between 1900 and 1920, the Prairie style of the Midwest and the Bay Tradition were broadly similar regionalisms, both Arts and Crafts-influenced but with divergent motives. The Prairie style resembled the Bay Tradition in that both emphasized the relationship between buildings and their physical surroundings. Also, both were anti-doctrine; as with the Bay Tradition, Prairie architects, especially Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), rejected the notion that they were a school. Instead, both were overtly regionalist modernisms which borrowed from a broad range of styles, including Arts and Crafts and Asian design, though those influences were used for different purposes.

Like the California bungalow, the Prairie school appeared around 1900 in reaction to the excesses of Victorian-era architecture, which the Bay Tradition also rejected. Its roots lay in eclectic historicism and the Shingle Style, which early Bay Tradition figures like Polk and Maybeck also used. Easterners like Frank Furness (1839-1912) and especially H. H. Richardson (1838-1886) were eclectics who used unadorned local materials as decorative elements, shunning applied décor. They influenced Wright's mentor Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), who applied his forbears' ideas to his own simpler forms.

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While the Bay Tradition began as a domestic style and was applied to commercial and institutional designs as well, the Prairie school was primarily a domestic idiom. It featured natural, often unadorned local materials; flowing, interpenetrating spaces; and long horizontal bands of windows. As the Bay Tradition aimed to convey its cosmopolitan culture, as well as the Bay Area's hills and redwoods, the Prairie style evoked its flat Midwestern landscapes and relied on local wood, brick, and stone to create the impression of being organic.

The Prairie school's vision of "nature" lay partly in a building's ability to express and landscape, but also in Frank Lloyd Wright's idea that nature and the machine were closely related, if not fundamentally one. According to Wright scholar Joseph Connors: "[Wright's] vision of nature emphasizes its abstract and even mathematical qualities, while his vision of the machine is highly organic and biomorphic. His houses are machines that have taken root in nature or that are metamorphosing into gardens."[32] Connors claims that Wright's Prairie houses achieved a balance of nature and machine, since for him no clear line between the two existed; nature could be mathematical and the machine sublime. "Nature" to Wright was the materials, while the "machine" meant craftsmanship and execution. Wright was critical of International Style modernism for being "all machine," lacking soul and heart.[33]

In an 1894 speech, Wright castigated American homebuilders in general for their ostentatious designs and admonished them to follow organic principles:

> Go to Nature, thou builder of houses, consider her ways and do not be petty and foolish. Let your home appear to grow easily from its site and shape it to sympathize with the surroundings if Nature is manifest there, and if not, try and be as quiet, substantial, and organic as she would have been if she had the chance.[34]

Wright shared with the Bay Tradition some desire to infuse cities with nature. Architecture historian Donald Hoffmann says that despite his

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many urban commissions, Wright had an anti-urban strain, seeing cities in general (especially Chicago) as abominations. Commissions like the Robie house in south Chicago (1909, Figure 5-4) helped infuse Wright's version of nature into newly-urbanized urban environs to give them heart and harmony. Hoffmann says: "Wright looked to nature to sustain his humanity . . . [and] found in nature only the most definite, the most fully developed strokes, those most free from compromise."[35] Nature appears here as a liberator, though in the Midwest it was a force from which people needed shelter. The Bay Tradition's liberating nature, on the other hand, was vastly more clement.

In Louis Sullivan's later work, which coincided with the Prairie style's peak, nature is manifested not in the building forms (which are generally simple and rectilinear) but in the décor. His most acclaimed later work, the National Farmers' Bank in Owatonna, Minnesota (Figures 5-5 and 5-6), is a cube with a large, arched stained-glass window (which changes colors throughout the day and gives an otherwise bland bank interior a vivid ambiance) and green terra-cotta ornamentation with vine-like patterns. While Wright uses logic to express nature, and Bay Tradition architects used unadorned native materials, Sullivan uses subtle applied décor, not in the Victorian tradition that he despised. Instead, architecture scholar H. Allen Brooks says that "enrichment was dependent on the textural expression of materials and the often lively juxtaposition of various shapes and forms. . . The historical styles, as commonly known, were rejected."[36]

Similarly, Chicago architect William Drummond, who had worked under both Sullivan and Wright, explained in 1915 that the Prairie style promoted truth and authenticity in building (like the Bay Tradition aimed to do, thanks to both schools' Arts and Crafts influences). He claimed, "The art of architecture in the new West hopes to generate a feeling of reverence for the hill and valley, the cliff and shore line,

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Figure 5-4. Frank Lloyd Wright, Robie house, Chicago, 1909. From website www.ou.edu/class/arch4443.

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Figure 5-5 and 5-6. Louis Sullivan, National Farmer's Bank, Owatonna, Minnesota, 1908. From websites www.greatbuildings.com and memory.loc.gov (respectively).

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the great smiling sunlit prairie. It also recognizes the need of conforming to certain limitations."[37] In addition, architecture was intended to have deeper spiritual meanings. Drummond wrote: "If architecture mirrors the soul, then why should any building be anything but beautiful or reasonable?"[38]

Prairie style architects aimed not only to glorify the Midwestern landscape and surround people with naturally-inspired beauty, but also to build something uniquely American and rooted in both Midwestern and American values. The buildings' horizontality was thought to manifest democracy by conveying levelness, and art historian Brian Spencer writes that the Prairie style "recognized . . . the ideals of American democracy, responsive to the social, cultural, and technological changes in a rapidly moving society."[39] Chicago architect John Van Bergen (1885-1969) wrote in 1915, that the style was urgently needed to express what modern America meant: "The steadily growing democracy of our land demands that our surroundings conform to its ideals. Formality must give way to simplicity and sham to the genuine."[40]

Van Bergen asserted that honest, simple building of the type the Arts and Crafts movement promoted was necessary to promote truth and progress, giving the Prairie school a political edge that the Bay Tradition did not openly pursue. The Bay Tradition had no similar program because none of its architects had clear political leanings; their writings express no overt political sentiments, though the Bay Area was a relatively reform-minded place. This, in addition to the lack of a single luminary like Wright, partly accounts for its relative obscurity.

Wright was not the only Prairie architect to build mainly for the well-to-do, and he did not contribute all the theory and rationale behind it. Other figures in the movement viewed the Prairie style more broadly, seeing in it new, democratic energies. Chicago architect

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George Maher (1864-1926), one of Wright's contemporaries, saw himself and his peers as missionaries of sorts, bringing attractive building to the public and thus helping improve their lives, much like the Bay Tradition's early figures tried to do. Maher claimed in 1914:

> The progressive movement in architecture is nothing more or less than the simple advancement of architectural thought keeping pace with the thoughts and lives of society to whom it ministers and democratic architecture is the result.[41]

Like the Bay Tradition's practitioners, Prairie architects had a sense of mission to improve people's lives through better architecture, at times imposing those views, as did Wright. Dwight Heald Perkins (1867-1941), Wright's contemporary and fellow former Louis Sullivan employee, shared with the Bay Tradition a desire to reform cityscapes, both in domestic and non-domestic structures. A noted school architect who designed numerous schools for the Chicago School Board between 1905 and 1910 (before being forced out for political reasons), Perkins is somewhat analogous to Ernest Kump in his concern for the life lived within his schools. According to Perkins' son Lawrence B. Perkins, also a Chicago architect:

> [His] buildings were safer and better places to teach than those that had gone before. These were huge steps toward buildings that were designed with children in mind. . . . As a social missionary, he brought parks, fresh air and into the Dickensian schools of the time.[42]

While other Prairie architects designed mainly for smaller towns and suburbs, Perkins did most of his work in Chicago proper, aiming to reform the city through architecture. The Prairie school proclaimed itself synonymous with (and expressive of) the surrounding landscape, and yet did not wholly reject the city - like the Bay Tradition aimed to improve the city and remedy its flaws instead of escaping it altogether.

The Bay Tradition and Prairie style share some ideological connections and aimed to do basically the same things: to build more truthfully according to the physical traits of their respective regions,

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and to improve people's lives with better architecture. However, the Bay Tradition seems to have been more successful in the long run, despite the Prairie style's prominence with Wright as its dominant figure. While the Prairie style claimed to be a "democratic" architecture," it was mostly realized in the form of homes for the affluent, not the working or lower- middle classes. Also, few Prairie style public buildings materialized, and those that did tended to convey monumentality rather than the informality of the houses. Dwight Perkins' Chicago schools are somewhat traditional in plan and scale, appearing far more formal than Ernest Kump's despite sharing the same ideals, as his 1909 design for the Grover Cleveland elementary school attests (Figure 5-7).[43]

In addition, its heyday was rather short, lasting from about 1900 into the early 1920s. It ended partly because it did not evolve as the Bay Tradition did, incorporating new modernist styles. Indeed, the Bay Tradition's roots lay in an eclectic historicism, which Wright rejected[44] and which seems to have influenced the Bay Tradition's flexibility. The ideas the Prairie school expressed were abstract and political in nature, rather than being oriented toward personal enjoyment and health, as was the Bay Tradition. Still, the Prairie style became far better known because of Wright's reputation and self-promotion. Aside from Maybeck, individual Bay Tradition architects were less well-known. Especially before 1940, they received little attention from the Eastern-based architecture press.

The Prairie style and the Bay Tradition are analogous, both drawing their affinity for native materials and authenticity in design from the Arts and Crafts movement. However, the Prairie school did not share the same antimodernism that the Bay Tradition incorporated, nor did it try to invoke the past in order to counteract the effects of modern industrial life. Additionally, the Prairie style had a larger

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Figure 5-7. Dwight Heald Perkins, Grover Cleveland Public School, Chicago, 1909. From H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School*.

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agenda that the Bay Tradition never embraced in a coherent form. Given the harshness of Midwestern winters, the Prairie style had no notion of the ideal indoor-outdoor lifestyle. Nonetheless, both idioms considered landscape the basis of their regional identities and tried to blur the boundaries between indoors and outdoors. Architectural practitioners of both styles shared an affinity for improving people's lives by giving them more natural (and thus more truthful) surroundings, showing the degree to which the "nature worship" Peter Schmitt describes permeated architecture in the early twentieth century.

SCANDINAVIAN MODERNISM: SPIRIT AND VERACITY

Like the Bay Tradition throughout the early twentieth century and the Prairie style between 1910 and 1920, Scandinavia's twentieth-century modernist architecture represents a strain of regionalist modernism that fused the modern and antimodern. It uses a historically-derived vernacular to convey a distinctly modern sense of regional identity. Scandinavian modernism is a closer analog to the Bay Tradition than the Prairie style, however, with two distinct phases occurring at roughly the same time and reacting similarly to modernist orthodoxy. Architectural historian William Coburn claims that both idioms are forms of resistance to the International Style, which aimed to be a hegemonic style overriding regional idioms.[45] However, neither the Bay Tradition nor Scandinavian modernism rebelled against the new modernist orthodoxy. Rather, each accommodated and incorporated it, subordinating it to well-developed regionalist sensibilities and reconciling the International Style with an antimodernism existing in both places.

Reactions against orthodox modernism began in the 1920s, mainly in nations which played little role in the International Style's creation, such as Scandinavia. According to historian/critic Peter Zellner:

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> This International Style, although intended as a description and not a prescription, must have seemed less partial to the needs of different locales or cultures. Instead it stood for progress and for the most part a Western or European definition of twentieth-century values. But by mid-century, Modern architecture, once adopted to various locales across the globe, had inevitably begun to diverge and split away from the purist, universally applicable, volumetrically regular standards of the International Style. . . . In other words, Modernism had become less a set rules to be slavishly followed than an underlay or palimpsest, which could be overwritten to suit the specific needs of a project or place.[46]

Both California and Scandinavia overwrote the International Style because each region had already developed a strong sense of place, shaped in part by isolation. Both had been physically isolated and architecturally undistinguished before 1880, and in both, wood was the primary building material, due to its availability.

Also, both places had a strong affinity for the "primitive," albeit in refined form. The Bay Tradition's antimodernism derived from its use of rough-hewn native materials and blurring of boundaries between indoors and outdoors to evoke a healthy, primitive, authentic bond to the landscape. In Scandinavia, which was relatively sophisticated and prosperous by 1900, a similar affinity for the antimodern existed. According to art historian Michelle Facos:

> [Scandinavia] challenges the normative conception of primitivism, which posits the dualistic existence of a civilized Self and a barbarous Other - our Western culture defined in categorical opposition to their tribal culture. In [the Nordic nations] . . . it elided these categories of Self and Other. There, Self was indigenous and primitive while Other was non-Nordic and urbane.[47]

Facos maintains that while Scandinavia's urban areas were highly literate, politically progressive, relatively affluent, and culturally well-developed long before 1900, those nations' intellectuals still considered the region primitive because of its rugged landscape, vast tracts of forest, and Norse ruins. Swedish intellectuals asserted pride in their roots and considered this a suitable strategy for coping with Scandinavia's rapid industrial growth in the 1880s and 1890s, thus

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helping develop an antimodern mindset among affluent urbanites. Facos argues:

> . . . the cultural conservatism of bourgeois intellectuals . . . [was not] accompanied by a desire to turn back the clock to a factional and idyllic golden age of Swedish rural life. They were in favor . . . of industrialization and urbanization, but they insisted on the subordination of these trends to larger issues of individual and societal well-being.[48]

The picture she presents of urban Scandinavia bears marked similarities to the Bay Area at about the same time (1880-1910). Both places were experiencing rapid industrial expansion and urban growth, and their more affluent residents reacted ambivalently to this, seeking a kind of authenticity in the kind of antimodernism Lears describes. In architecture, this meant embracing architecture that evoked the sylvan landscapes in each region, as well as authenticity and truth.

While the Bay Tradition's first phase was evolving from an eclectic approach to established styles and fusing them with a woodsy, nature-evoking sensibility, Scandinavian architecture was dominated by the "National Romantic" style. The latter flourished in Scandinavia and Germany between 1880 and 1920. According to art historian Barbara Miller Lane, the movement drew from the histories of Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark in order to convey the essence of these peoples' lives. It combined ancient and medieval wooden vernacular forms of building with more formal historicist styles from outside the region, as well as more contemporary influences like Arts and Crafts.[49] In public buildings, the movement's architects aimed for monumental scale and effect, while the home was conceived as a haven and rendered in ways markedly similar to the Arts and Crafts style.

Like the Bay Tradition, National Romanticism was also geared largely for an urban middle class, which sought escape from the city's ugliness and excesses, if not from cities per se. Says Lane:

> [The movement's adherents] retreated from the city, employed peasant and mythological themes, and developed a commitment to the

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> total work of art. This was the home or studio in which the artist . . . created the whole environment - not only the building and its exterior landscaping but also furniture, textiles, and objects of use. This work of art was also intended to reflect an image of a province or region that embodied the best qualities of the nation. . . .[50]

Similarly, says architecture historian Dennis Doordan, National Romanticism used vernacular forms like rough-hewn native wood to evoke not only the landscape but also the "folk" past. While the style reacted against the vulgarity of consumerism and industrialism,[51] says Doordan, its importance lay more in how it expressed its nationalism:

> National Romanticism emerged in countries struggling to achieve a measure of cultural and political independence. Because folk traditions were perceived as yet unspoiled by either foreign domination or the emerging modern world, they could provide a vocabulary of forms and motifs for designers seeking an indigenous design language.[52]

Like other aspects of antimodernism, this is very much a symptom of modern conditions. Cultural theorist Benedict Anderson explains in *Imagined Communities* that seemingly antimodern cultural movements like National Romanticism were in fact laden with nationalist sentiments, and nationalism represented modernism in general. Emerging nation-states, says Anderson, needed shared vocabularies rooted in a common history, in order to better build community.[53] Norway gained its independence in 1905, after centuries of rule by Denmark and Sweden; Finland became independent only in 1917, after being politically dominated for centuries by Russia and linguistically by Sweden. Because the Finns' subordination had been cultural as well as political, they found it especially necessary to revive, or even manufacture, a folk heritage.

Though National Romanticism is different from the modernism that Aalto and others represented, it resembles the early Bay Tradition in that both idioms were historicist yet also incorporated the natural surroundings in order to evoke both nature and place. Also, they shared similar class orientations; those who both built and lived in National Romantic-style homes style were generally the bourgeoisie, much as the

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Bay Tradition appealed to the Bay Area's more affluent urban dwellers and professionals. Lane writes: "For the urban middle-class dwelling of the late nineteenth-century city, National Romantic artists and architects substituted as an ideal the dwelling close to nature . . . in the simple wooden structures of northern antiquity."[54]

National Romanticism rooted its nationalism partly in myth and history, but especially in expressing kinship with the natural environment, which was often cold and harsh, but also rugged and well-wooded. Lane's comments about National Romanticism reveal parallels to the Bay Tradition regarding the use of materials:

> All [homes] were self-consciously humble in materials, furnishings, and the management of spaces. They were embedded in nature, permitting new relationships between interiors and the exterior landscape. They were fashioned - inside and out - of local and natural materials and reflected some of the oldest traditions of the region. . . .[55]

Some examples of National Romanticism reveal an architecture markedly similar to the work of Maybeck and others at roughly the same time. Finnish architect Pekka Halonen's house at Tuusula, built in 1899 (Figure 5-8), is a two-story structure with a high pitched roof, rough-hewn log siding, and ample windows, including one large picture window on the side. Though built as a home for an affluent client, Halonen's house looks more like a large cabin or other vernacular structure. It conveys not luxury but a kind of folk simplicity, albeit with modern conveniences.

However, this phase of early modernism took the folk life of the region far more seriously than the Bay Tradition did. While Bay Tradition architects like Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck often dabbled in local history by incorporating Spanish elements, National Romantics had deeper cultural concerns. Lane claims:

> This kind of regionalism was new. It stemmed from the ideas of the early nineteenth century about landscape and rural peoples, but it took on a different importance now as a context for

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Figure 5-8. Pekka Halonen, house at Tuusula, Finland, 1899.
Figure 5-9. Lars Backer, Ekeberg restaurant, Oslo, Norway, 1928. Both from Barbara Miller Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries.*

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> speculations about the identity of the family, the folk, and individual, and their relationship to the nation.[56]

Though she does not look at trends in northern California architecture or anywhere else, one sees a broader set of concerns at work than architecture evoking only nature and physical well-being. This kind of regionalism resembled the Bay Tradition in its self-consciousness, modernism, and its use of technology and materials, and it drew from the experiences of industrialization and urbanization to prescribe more intimate relationships between people and their physical environments.

Scandinavia's modernism changed at roughly the same time that the Bay Tradition did, eschewing historicism for clean, cubist modernist forms but retaining the use of and respect for local, natural materials. After 1925, when the International Style was adopted in Scandinavia (and dubbed "Functionalism"), it had faithful imitators there, as it did in the United States. In Finland, Sweden, and Norway, though, it was also interpreted in less formal ways, merging its simple cubist-derived forms with unadorned local wood to give structures an organic appearance. Also, a new generation of modernists emerged, led by Norwegian Lars Backer and Finns Erik Bryggman and Alvar Aalto.

Backer (1892-1930) was among the first Scandinavian architects to embrace the International Style, and he quickly adapted it to the regional vernacular. In a 1925 article called "Our Spineless Architecture," Backer proclaimed Norway's architectural independence and admonished his peers to cure the cluttered, confused Norwegian cityscape: "We shall abandon concealment and all exterior frippery, function shall decide the form. Plan and facade shall be as one. . . . What we are building lacks the spirit of our times and any form of veracity."[57]

Backer's own remedies included the Ekeberg Restaurant in Oslo (Figure 5-9), a modest-looking two-story wooden structure in the heart

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of the city. With its unadorned wood siding, long bands of windows, and sundeck occupying half the second floor, this structure is more than slightly reminiscent of Wurster's Schuckl Canning Company headquarters, built fourteen years later. The structure is designed for outdoor activity and evokes nature through both its materials and its functions. While Backer's premature death halted his career and limited his prominence, he helped set the tone for Scandinavian modernism's second phase, which, like the Bay Tradition, matured at mid-century.

After World War II, Scandinavian modernism matured at roughly the same time as the Bay Tradition's second phase. Its designs became more daring and original, while retaining their informality and intimate scale. An example of the new domestic architecture is Norwegian architect Knut Knutsen's summer house at Portor (1948, Figure 5-10), which seems to literally grow from its rocky, rugged terrain. A series of pyramid-like pavilions set amidst boulders and pines on the Norwegian coast, the house has a plain, rough look, because Knutsen used waste wood due to postwar shortages of building material. The home, while presumably comfortable and well-appointed, conveys a modesty bordering on the primitive. Writing of the house in 1952, Knutsen stated a Wurster-like belief in architectural modesty:

> [People build homes] in order to be grand and to show off. . . . So, we tire of houses but never of nature. Nature inspires us, therefore it is important that we preserve it and this is best done by being in harmony with it and by subordinating our houses to it. . . . There are a great many ways of doing this and one of the most important is to assure that the rhythm and movement in house and landscape are in harmony.[58]

Also, public buildings were often rendered in smaller scales and with attention to planting and detail, giving them an informal, almost domestic appearance, much like Wurster and Kump did in post-1930 California. Knutsen's Norwegian Embassy building in Stockholm (Figure 5-11), designed in 1947 and finished five years later, is hardly a formal, prepossessing structure conveying decorum and tradition; it

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Figure 5-10. Knut Knutsen, summer house, Portor, Norway, 1948. From Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Modern Scandinavian Architecture*.

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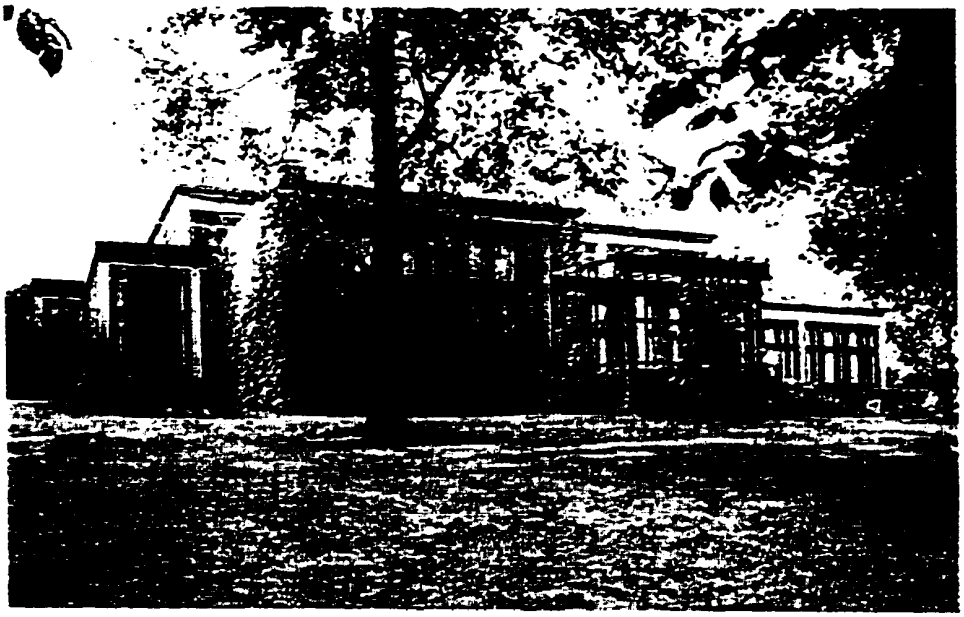

Figure 5-11. Knut Knutsen, Norwegian embassy, Stockholm, Sweden, 1952. From Norberg-Schulz, *Modern Scandinavian Architecture*.

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instead resembles a Bay Tradition home, with large expanses of windows, unadorned wood trim, lush planting, and a relatively intimate scale.

The works of Aalto (1898-1976) reflect not only this sensibility but also offer interesting parallels with those of his longtime friend, Bay Traditionalist William Wurster. Aalto was, according to art historian Paul David Pearson, "not only the last modern designer who was capable of producing a heroic level of architecture, but a unique contributor of romantic modes that challenged the latter day International Style. . . ."[59]

Entering private practice in 1923, after serving in Finland's post-independence civil war, Aalto dabbled in the waning National Romantic style, which Pearson defines as "rustic classicism," with Arts and Crafts elements.[60] Early examples include the Youth Society Building in Alajarvi (1919), which resembles a large farmhouse with its board-and-batten construction and in this sense is vaguely reminiscent of Wurster's Gregory house.

By the late 1920s, Aalto was borrowing from Le Corbusier and at times worked in the conventional International Style, as his headquarters for Turku's *Turun Sanomat* newspaper (1928) attests. In the 1930s, Aalto, a self-proclaimed "Americaphile," took an interest in William Wurster's work and met him in 1937. They remained friends for years and shared a common interest in architecture's human aspects.[61] Says Pearson: "[Aalto believed] that people required humanized architecture. He chose to realize that quality through the romantic modernist development of the modern vernacular architecture of Finland's traditional past."[62]

Much like Wurster had tried with the Gregory house to infuse his modernism with the simplicity of a vernacular past, Aalto aimed in his postwar works to give his International-Style-based works a rustic feeling as well as a human, intimate scale. In both homes and public

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buildings, Aalto worked along Wurster's lines, to create relatively small, simple structures which used local materials well and took advantage of Finland's sunlight, which was scarce in winter but abundant in summer.

His town hall at Saynatsalo (1952, Figure 5-12) is a single-story, L-shaped brick structure with broad expanses of floor-to-ceiling windows and a gently sloped roof. A large lawn and trees surround it, and the building resembles a private home more than a city hall, much as Knutsen's Norwegian Embassy looks domestic and not governmental. The same priorities that characterize the mid-century Bay Tradition - use of local materials, relatively modest scale, orientation toward the outdoors, and an informal or even primitive appearance - are much in evidence.

Scandinavian modernism and the Bay Tradition are driven by many of the same motivations where nature is concerned. In both, the landscape evoked something primitive and real that urbanization and industrial growth seemed to be rapidly obscuring. Natural-looking architecture meant not only deeper attachment to the place, but also a healthiness that counteracted the "softening" effects of modern life. Both were antimodern in this sense, but Scandinavia's modern architecture had larger political and cultural meanings as well, since Norway and Finland were newly independent in the early twentieth century and thus sought to define their national cultures after centuries of foreign rule. Architecture that evoked the primitive landscape seemed deeply rooted in history, while the Bay Tradition evoked an ahistorical landscape, generally ignoring the Bay Area's Indian and Hispanic heritages.

The relevance of the California bungalow, the Prairie style, and Scandinavian modernism to the Bay Tradition stems from the fact that all four genres shared common roots in the Arts and Crafts movement and all responded to urban growth, industrialization, and ostentatious

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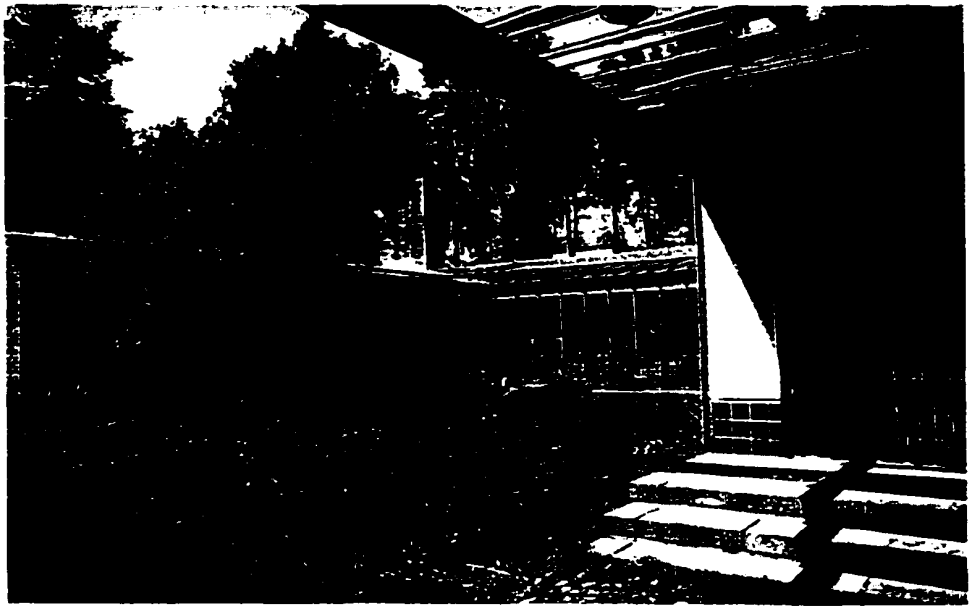

Figure 5-12. Alvar Aalto, town hall, Saynatsalo, Finland, 1952. From Lane, *National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries.*

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Victorian-era design by turning toward vernacular simplicity in form, use of materials, and accommodation of a tamed kind of nature. In addition, they were also affected by the International Style's advent in the 1910s and 1920s. This new modernism opposed all regionalisms and previous architectural idioms, considering them inauthentic and irrelevant in the emerging world. The antimodernisms discussed in this chapter considered themselves authentic because of their relationship with nature. The International Style repudiated that tie. The Prairie style did not accommodate it, largely because of Wright's dismissal of the International Style and its architects. The bungalow's heyday was already ending by the time the International Style debuted in the United States, though it had reacted to industrialism by asserting an antimodern aesthetic to combat the perceived ugliness and unreality of modern life. To modernists, the bungalow seemed quaint and irrelevant, another aspect of the past to be discarded. The Bay Tradition and Scandinavian modernism, on the other hand, accommodated the new modernism but fused it with a respect for native materials that evoked the local and antimodern. Thus, both idioms subordinated the International Style to well-established notions of local identity.

The Bay Tradition's significance derives in part from the fact that it is an important and long-lasting part of a broad cultural and intellectual milieu which questioned and reacted to architectural modernism and modernity in general. The International Style's creators presented it as a sort of all-consuming hegemony that threatened to wipe away previous historical or vernacular forms, but in the Bay Area and Scandinavia, it was treated as simply a practical technological element and incorporated with existing practices of building naturally. This irony is in keeping with the essential qualities of modernity itself, which is self-contradictory and ephemeral. In this sense, regional

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modernisms prove that the International Style, which proclaimed itself the proverbial last word in architecture, was itself simply a phase.

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THE BAY TRADITION'S MEANING

The Bay Tradition's importance transcends the boundaries of architectural history. Seen simply in terms of style, the Bay Tradition has little relevance outside of the San Francisco region, and it seems to be little more than an interesting local interpretation of various existing idioms. However, the Bay Tradition was a distinct phenomenon in the history of landscapes, expressing sense of place though the place itself. To elite Bay Area residents and the architects who built for them, the region was defined by its scenery and climate, and to a lesser but significant degree by the place's cosmopolitanism and cultural development. These in turn influenced a lifestyle based on physical well-being and cultural sophistication, and the regional idiom aimed to express and facilitate these practices. At a time when more affluent Americans increasingly embraced a tame form of nature in their leisure, the Bay Tradition went further and incorporated it into everyday living, with homes that facilitated outdoor socializing and relaxation.

Essentially, the Bay Area's sense of place centered on the physical place itself and on geography, more so than the locals' cultural traits. Bay Tradition architecture refined the place's wildness, using native materials in somewhat rough form to convey the essence of the woods and including patios and large windows to blur the boundaries between indoors and outdoors. Instead of confining their inhabitants, Bay Tradition buildings offered protection from only the uncomfortable elements and tried to bring the outdoors inside as much as possible. This practice transcended stylistic concerns. When the Bay Tradition incorporated elements of the International Style, it eschewed

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only the applied historicist decoration, retaining the use of unadorned local materials and lenient boundaries between indoors and outdoors.

Several authors, among them Stilgoe and Jackson, have documented the evolution of the American affluent suburb and depicted it as a "middle landscape" combining domesticated nature and urban amenities and sensibilities. The Bay Area was not alone in this regard, especially since many of its new arrivals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were transplanted Easterners replicating the cityscapes they had left behind. Also, the Bay Area was not the only place which self-consciously tried to create a distinctive urban landscape. In Mona Domosh's *Invented Cities*, both New York and Boston created cityscapes which spoke of each city's culture and values (New York's business orientation and Boston's intellectual climate).

However, the Bay Tradition is set apart by the ways in which it combined these phenomena. The suburban landscapes Stilgoe and Jackson discuss were created as idealizations of country living in general. These places did not create or constitute a regionalism that demonstrated or facilitated the informal lifestyles and attachment to the clement outdoors that the Bay Tradition promoted in virtually every aspect of life. Regionalisms elsewhere in the United States generally manifested themselves in other aesthetic forms, mainly in literature, painting, and music (all discussed by Dorman and Whisnant). They used other aesthetic forms to evoke place, and they usually focused on some aspect of the inhabitants' history. The Bay Tradition emphasized place in its "sense of place," making it more than simply a distinctive kind of architecture. Instead, it is an urban landscape based on an elite vision of how place, cultural values, and lifestyle are interrelated.

From studying the Bay Tradition, one gains a greater understanding of how both landscapes and regionalisms manifest class values. It illustrates how a class of residents form their expectations of what a

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region signifies, and how those ideas in turn shape the landscape. In the Bay Area, one finds phenomena resembling those found in Starr's *Americans and the California Dream* and Whisnant's *All That Is Native and Fine*. A group of affluent residents, mostly Eastern migrants before 1900, saw in the Bay Area a better version of places they had left behind, with better weather and more opportunities to prosper and be liberated from convention. They imposed their expectations on a then-largely empty place and produced urban landscapes that seemed to give them feelings of liberation, physical well-being, and cultural cultivation. In addition, the media reinforced these images (in *Sunset*) and evolved them even further into a "Western lifestyle" that was, more accurately, an affluent Bay Area way of living.

However, this vision and these landscapes did not speak for the universal Bay Area experience (if indeed such a thing exists). Lower-middle- and working-class Bay Area residents were generally excluded from having these costly sylvan landscapes, instead buying tract homes in less aesthetically pleasing but more affordable communities. Also, the poor in Bay Tradition housing projects had their landscape dictated to them, and they were unable to enjoy the benefits of the Bay Tradition experience. The result, as with the Appalachian culture Whisnant examines, was somewhat ersatz and attests to the class-biased nature and limited scope presented in regionalisms.

However ersatz this Bay Area regionalism may have been, it demonstrates how attached the Bay Tradition's creators and proponents were to their vision of nature, and how it manifested itself for a century. This clement, liberating, leisure-oriented notion of nature was the crux of their sense of place, and its manifestation as architecture and urban environments (as well as *Sunset*'s "Western living") exemplifies how a genteel, somewhat abstract concept of "nature" built a concrete and tangible notion of "nature." Instead of

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creating create aesthetic paeans to nature in a medium like painting, photography, or literature, Bay Tradition regionalists used the place to convey sense of place, nature to build nature.

While the Bay Tradition fell out of fashion by 1970, its landscapes persist throughout the San Francisco region, often in their intended form. Northeast Berkeley, for example, still offers a sharp contrast to the densely-settled, sparsely-planted west side of town, and the hillside areas where Polk, Maybeck, and Eichler built homes have kept their sylvan appearance and class texture. More importantly, though, they attest to the processes by which people shape landscapes and the ways in which Bay Area regionalists, who considered the place wholly unique, expressed sense of place through the place itself.

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From: Diana Blum
To: Public Comment - LC
Subject: Public comment on proposal for Los Altos Library
Date: Thursday, August 7, 2025 6:41:17 AM

Dear Members of the Los Altos Library Commission,

As a physician, I strongly support the restroom proposal that includes traditional men's and women's restrooms alongside a non-gendered single-stall restroom and family restrooms. This balanced approach acknowledges the diverse needs of our population while ensuring safety, comfort, and dignity for all. While gender-neutral facilities can be inclusive for some individuals, it's essential to also maintain gender-separated options, particularly for women who may have valid concerns about privacy, cultural or religious expectations, or personal safety.

In my professional experience, adults—like children—need restrooms where they feel secure managing sensitive health needs, such as menstruation, post-partum care, or medical conditions requiring discretion. Women, in particular, can experience heightened anxiety using mixed-gender spaces for these reasons. Offering both types of facilities allows everyone—regardless of gender identity or cultural background—to access public resources comfortably. This proposal reflects a thoughtful, inclusive compromise that supports public health, respects bodily autonomy, and affirms the diversity of our community.

Respectfully,
Dr. Diana Blum

From: Terah James
To: Public Comment - LC; Terah James
Subject: Please Keep Library Bathrooms *Separate* - ITEM #3
Date: Thursday, August 7, 2025 11:57:42 AM

To the Library Commission Members:

As a frequent patron of the Los Altos Library, I implore decision makers to keep the bathrooms separate: Men's and Women's.

While engaging in *any* bathroom task, even when washing one's hands, females, of all ages, ought not to be forced to use any room alongside males.

Unless it is a single use, fully equipped area, please keep it simple: keep bathrooms separate. Thank you.

From: Bill Hough
To: Public Comment - LC
Subject: public comment on item 3 on Aug 7 agenda
Date: Thursday, August 7, 2025 3:38:40 PM

The allegation that people want to reduce the library collection to make way for meeting space is false.
Obviously, the consultants pushing this report have an agenda.

The reality is that the library is too aggressive in discarding books as it is.
If you must remove books on site, store them in a warehouse where the public can retrieve them via hold request.

Bill Hough

LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

6:30 PM – Thursday, May 1, 2025

Los Altos Community Center – Apricot Room

ESTABLISH QUORUM

Chair Bedard called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm

Present: Chair Bedard; Vice Chair Morris; Commissioner Fawcett

Absent: Commissioner Carter

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Public Comment: None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **Minutes:** Approve minutes of the regular meeting of March 6, 2025

   Public Comment: None

   Action: Commissioner Carter moved that the Commission accept the minutes of the regular meeting of March 6, 2025 as written. Chair Bedard seconded the motion.
   Approve: Bedard, Fawcett, Morris
   Oppose:
   Abstain:
   Absent: Carter
   Motion passed: 4-0-0-1

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

2. **Discuss Commission Work Plan**

   Public Comment: None

   Action: None

3. **Receive Update on Main Library Renovation Process from City Staff**

Public Comment: None

Action: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS ONLY

4. **Receive Los Altos Library Endowment Distribution Letter**

STAFF REPORTS

5. **Receive report from Santa Clara County Library District**

6. **Receive report from Main Library Staff**

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT
Chair Bedard adjourned the meeting at 7:22 pm.

LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

6:30 PM – Thursday, May 22, 2025

Los Altos Library – Orchard Room

ESTABLISH QUORUM

Chair Bedard called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm

Present: Chair Bedard; Vice Chair Morris; Commissioners Carter and Fawcett

Absent: None

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

1. **Discuss and Provide Feedback on Main Library Improvement Design Concepts with ABA**

   Public Comment: Melissa Smith, Brittany Stevens, Robert Robson, Suzanne Epstein, Darwin Poules, Duncan MacMillan, Sherry Azaria, Allan Epstein

   Action: None

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bedard adjourned the meeting at 8:27 pm.

LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: August 7, 2025

Subject Review and Recommend Approval to Move Forward with Main Library Improvement Design Concept

Prepared by: Anthony Carnesecca, Assistant to the City Manager

Purpose
Review and Recommend Approval to Move Forward with Main Library Improvement Design Concept

Background
During the Future Agenda Items Discussion section of the Los Altos City Council meeting on September 26, 2023, Councilmember Dailey requested the Library Commission to bring forward to Council at a Study Session the status of the library and options they have considered for improving the library for consideration of Council, including, but not limited to the potential use of parcel tax funds. Mayor Meadows and Vice Mayor Weinberg supported the future agenda topic.

During the October 5, 2023 Library Commission meeting, Chair Fawcett moved that the Commission form an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Vice Chair Bedard and Commissioner Crane to work on documents in preparation for the Study Session with City Council focused on possible library improvements as directed at the September 26. 2023 City Council meeting that will terminate upon receipt of the Final Report to the Commission. Commissioner Crane seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

During the January 4, 2024 Library Commission meeting, the final proposal was unanimously approved by the Commission to move onto the City Council.

During the January 23, 2024 City Council Study Session, the Potential Improvements to Library Ad-Hoc Subcommittee presented their recommendations for improvements to the City Council. City Council directed the ad-hoc subcommittee to continue with the process by presenting the information to the North County Library Authority and requesting that the NCLA approve funding an RFP to be issued by the City of Los Altos based on their recommendations.

During the January 29, 2024 NCLA Meeting, the ad-hoc subcommittee presented the same information as presented to the City Council one week prior. NCLA board member Dailey made a motion to authorize the City of Los Altos to issue an RFP, jointly by the City and the County Library System with NCLA to cover the costs associated with the issuance of the RFP. Secretary Hill seconded the motion. The motion passed in a unanimous vote.

At the June 25, 2024 City Council meeting, City Council unanimously authorized the City Manager to issue a Request for Proposals for Design Services for Los Altos Main Library Improvements.

The City issued the RFP - Design Services for Los Altos Main Library Improvements on Wednesday, July 17, 2024. The RFP closed on Thursday, August 22, 2024 at 3 pm.

The RFP divided the improvements into three distinct phases. Phase 1 is a Design Alternative Analysis that will investigate the existing condition, create design alternatives, evaluate cost estimates, and garner consensus for a final preferred design. Phase 2 is 65% drawings that will include technical specifications for the building with a more detailed cost breakdown. Phase 3 is bid-ready construction documents and construction transition.

The City received nine proposals for the project. The review committee reviewed all the proposals and invited the highest-ranking proposers to a final interview.

The review committee conducted interviews with the finalists and selected Anderson Brule Architects (ABA) as the consultant to complete the design work for the Los Altos Main Library Improvements.

During the October 3, 2024 Library Commission meeting, City staff provided an update on the process and next steps, including a request for funds from the North County Library Authority and a contract award from the Los Altos City Council. The Library Commission unanimously recommended approval to move forward in this process.

During the November 18, 2024 North County Library Authority meeting, their board unanimously approved the funding allocation to the City of Los Altos for Phase 1 of the Main Library Improvements Project.

During the December 10, 2024 meeting, the Los Altos City Council unanimously awarded a contract for ABA to execute Phase 1 of the Main Library Improvements Project.

Beginning in January 2025, ABA began their work to complete Phase 1 of the Main Library Improvements project focused on investigating the existing condition, creating design alternatives, evaluating cost estimates, and garnering consensus for a final preferred design.

Initially, ABA investigated the existing conditions of the Los Altos Main Library by evaluating the building, and reviewing the proposals presented by the Library Commission Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and previous Needs Assessments. This analysis helped inform their analysis of the building and proposed improvements to the space.

While evaluating the existing conditions, ABA moved forward with beginning to engage with the library community and beyond. As part of the initial design alternative process, ABA conducted three feedback workshops to review and discuss the proposed improvements into order to gain a shared understanding of project background, goals, and timeline; and, input for validation of prioritized improvements. These events were hosted on March 6, 2025 at a Library Commission meeting, March 12, 2025 3 – 5 pm, and March 22, 2025 10 am – 12 pm.

At the culmination of those meetings and the existing site investigation, ABA reviewed the current site analysis, the proposals from the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee, and community feedback.

Accordingly, ABA created the two design concepts that were presented to the public for specific commentary on the concepts created by the architectural team. These two design concepts were presented at three public engagement opportunities, a Special Library Commission meeting on May 22, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Orchard Room, and two workshops in the Library Open Space on May 24, 2025 from 10 am – 12 pm and May 28, 2025 from 3 – 5 pm.

Discussion

After reviewing the feedback provided to the design team through those community feedback sessions and beyond, the design team made modifications to the design and identified a preferred design concept that met the prioritized proposals from the Library Commission Ad-Hoc Subcommittee.

The design proposal presented for consideration today accomplishes three main objectives:

1. increases the ability of the Library to provide programs and services to the community,
2. improves the infrastructure of the Library as it stands today; and,
3. incorporates feedback received from the community through the engagement process.

After the Commission reviews the proposal at this meeting, the project will move forward to City Council for approval to move forward the preferred design concept and continue working with ABA on this project.

ATTACHMENTS

1. ABA Presentation

Library Commission
August 7, 2025

LOS ALTOS LIBRARY
Library Improvements

01 Introduction / Agenda

02 Summary of Additional Outreach and Input

03 Final Conceptual Design

04 Conceptual Design Cost Model

05 Conclusion and Next Steps

Where we have been

- Last Library Commission Meeting was held on May 22nd, 2025
- Since that meeting the team has completed the following input and coordination sessions:
    - Community Open House on May 24th
    - Community Open House on May 28th
    - Library Supervisors Workshop on June 11th
    - Multiple steering meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee
- Design team has incorporated the input to create a single conceptual design option and costs

Why we are here

1. Provide an update on community and staff input received since the last Commission meeting
2. Share the final design concept and corresponding costs in response to the input received
3. Outline next steps in the process

What we are looking for from the Commission

1. Observations and discussion on the additional community input
2. Feedback on the the final conceptual design option and corresponding costs

1.0 Introduction

ROUND 1

ROUND 2

We are here!

City & Library Staff Meeting
February 26, 2025

Stakeholder Feedback Focus Group
Commission
March 6, 2025

Stakeholder Feedback Focus Group
Open House
March 22, 2025

Stakeholder Feedback Focus Group
Open House
March 12, 2025

Stakeholder Design Review Focus Group
Commission
May 22, 2025

Stakeholder Design Review Focus Group
Open House
May 28, 2025

Stakeholder Design Review Focus Group
Open House
May 24, 2025

Library Supervising Staff Feedback Session
June 11, 2025

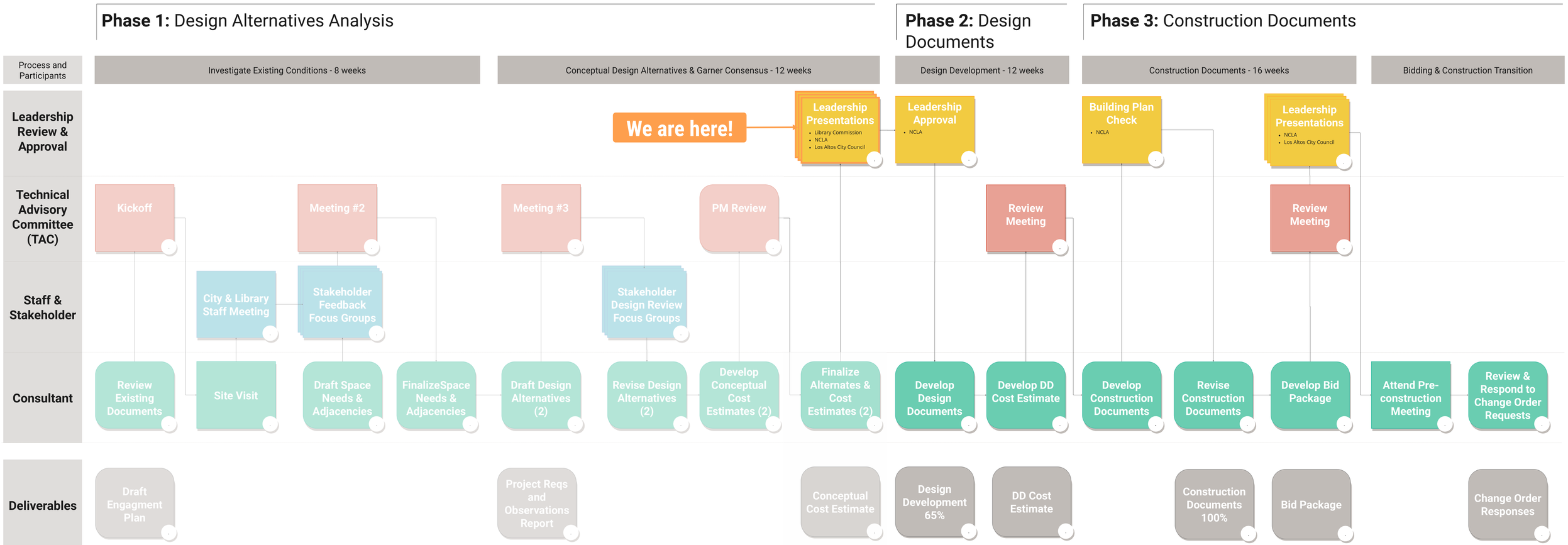
Leadership Presentation
Commission
August 7, 2025

Leadership Presentation
North County Library Authority
TBD

Leadership Presentation
City Council
TBD

1.1 Outreach

City of Los Altos - Main Library Improvements
Process Map



We are here!

PHASE 1
DESIGN ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

PHASE 2
DESIGN DOCUMENTS

- *SCHEMATIC DESIGN*
- *DESIGN DEVELOPMENT*

PHASE 3
CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

- *50% CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS*
- *95% CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS*
- *PLAN CHECK & PERMITTING*

PHASE 4
BID & AWARD

PHASE 5
CONTRUCTION ADMIN.

8 months | 7 months | 8 months | 3 months | 10-24 months

1.3 Overall Project Process

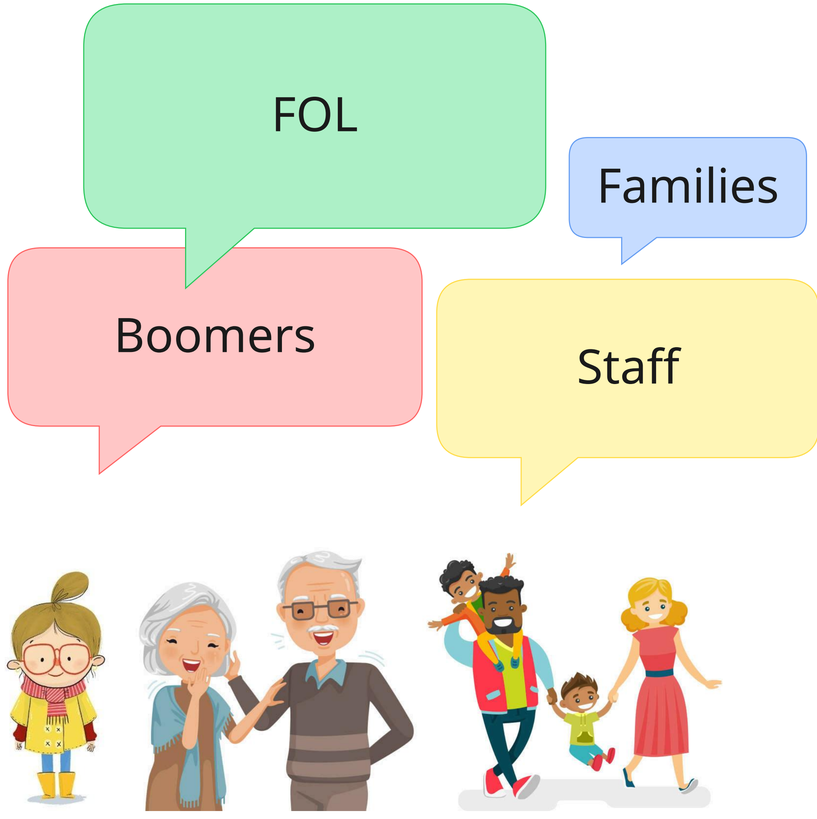
02 Summary of Additional Outreach and Input

Round 1

Staff Workshop - 2/26/25
Library Commission Meeting - 3/6/25
Public Open House #1 - 3/12/25
Public Open House #2 - 3/22/25
Library Commission Meeting - 5/22/25

Round 2

Public Open House #3 - 5/24/25
Public Open House #4 - 5/28/25
Library Supervisor's Meeting - 6/11/25
Library Commission Meeting - 8/7/25
City Council Meeting - TBD
NCLA Meeting - TBD



2.1 Summary of Outreach

- **Friends of the Library**
    - Needs more workspace than proposal shows
    - Relies on highly visible and accessible sales space in the library
    - Difficulties of proposed workspace location for materials flow (prefer direct exterior access)
    - Desires flexibility in a sales space
    - Adjacency of workspace to recycle bins
    - Concerns on behalf of staff for staff space size and storage

- **Gender Neutral Restrooms**
    - Concern about safety and security
    - If pursuing, consider an equivalent option for those that prefer traditional restrooms

- **Meeting Rooms**
    - Need clarity and study on quantity and sizes

- **Flexible Community Space**
    - Need flexible large space for community to come together

- **Collections Quantity**
    - Questioning the need to maintain current collections size

2.2 Community Meetings Summary - Round 2

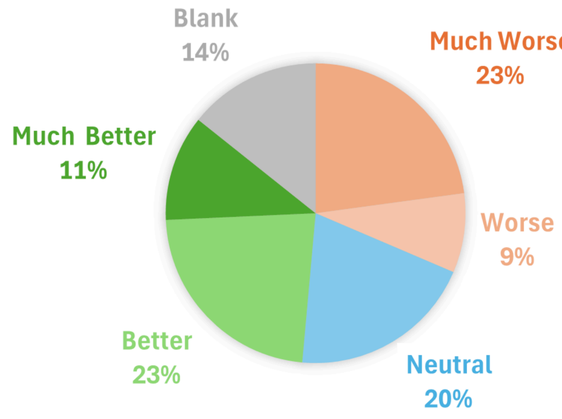
- **Staff Workspace**
    - Reviewed three (3) different layout options for staff workspace
    - Received input from multiple voices/perspectives
        - Children's Librarian
        - Library Circulation Supervisor
        - Supervising Librarian for Adult and Teen Services
    - Input received on
        - Automated Materials Handling (AMH) equipment location/layout
        - Workflow and circulation
        - Staff Lounge and Restrooms
        - Quantity of offices needed
        - Sizes and quantities of workstations needed
        - Individual task space
        - Group task/work space
        - Layout and sorting space
        - Cart and storage requirements

- **Main Library Space**
    - Consider automatic sliding door at children's area to help with noise isolation
    - Collections quantity needs to be reviewed deeply (perform weeding and collections target)
-

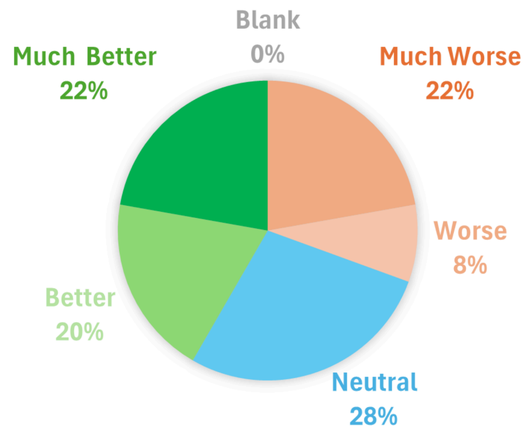
2.3 Library Supervisors Meeting Summary

2.4 Key Findings - Round 2

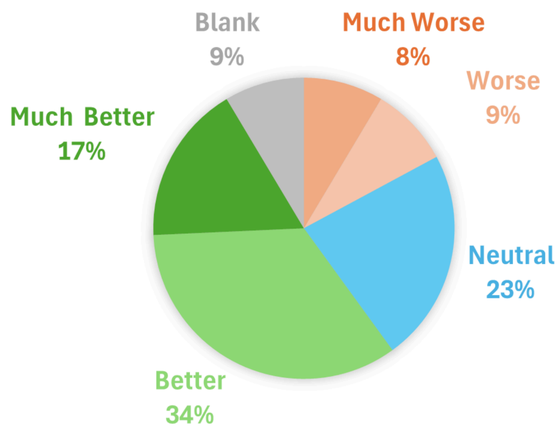
IMPROVE FOL WORK AND SALE SPACE OPT 1



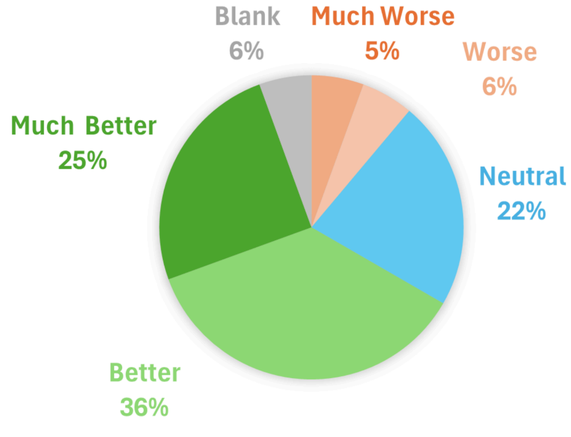
IMPROVE FOL WORK AND SALE SPACE OPT 2



OVERALL SUCCESS OPT 1



OVERALL SUCCESS OPT 2



2.5 Key Findings - Round 2

2.6 Key Findings - Round 2

There is both support for shared non-gendered restrooms and those that are opposed.

Input was generally supportive of family restrooms.

There was some confusion about the difference between the community non-gendered restrooms and family restrooms.

"People used to not fear unisex/gender-neutral restrooms. I believe that fear is stoked by social media and extremists. It is NOT serious or supported by facts. Gendered restrooms create long lines and frustration. Let's normalize privacy-first restrooms for all genders."

- Community Member

"I strongly object to an all-gender restroom. Women, especially teen girls, need private restroom facilities. Most people support restrooms being assigned. Mixed-gender restrooms may feel unsafe. People will not speak up if assaulted or made uncomfortable. What does "done right" mean? More people want gender-separated and private space all around."

- Community Member

Restrooms

"How often will all-gender bathrooms be cleaned? I see them dirtier than private."

"I'm glad restrooms save space and remove redundancy. Gender-neutral with visual privacy is a good, thoughtful move."

- Community Members

Friends of the Library is unhappy with the conceptual plans that would reduce their workspace. There were some proposals of moving FOL sales space offsite

"Friends space cannot be reduced without diminishing the productivity of core operations. (Both options)"

- Community Member

"Off-site warehouse for Friends book sales makes more sense. On-site is not the best use of prime space."

- Community Member

There were a good number of community comments on design details that will be considered as the design moves into future phases.

"[Make] a more inclusive library. Be prepared to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ adults, teens, and children. ADA accessibility must be built into all circulation."

- Community Member

Furniture & Design

"Please ensure mix of collaborative & solo tables in 4th space."

"Add soundproofing to teen area for acoustic separation."

"Add reading nooks with comfy seating."

- Community Members

"[Build] a more inclusive library and be ready to meet the City's CAP Climate Action Adaptation Plan with flexible, welcoming community space."

- Community Member

There was some confusion about the passport office being in the library. We believe some didn't know it exists there now.

Support was mixed regarding the extended hours space with some concerns about wasted space. Others want to be sure it is welcoming for people to gather and interact and should be larger than proposed.

There was an appreciation for providing quiet study / meeting rooms while others that don't use something like that didn't think it was necessary.

In favor of the concept that elevates our library as a community priority. FOL & heavy library use, together.

- Community Member

Dividing Wall

"Glass walls: good for separation, privacy, and letting light in!"

"The Marketplace is a creative use of space. Just be careful with acoustic treatment!"

"The Marketplace / after hours area is too small in both designs. We need more welcoming spaces to encourage gathering and interaction among people."

- Community Members

Meeting Spaces

"I like that the library allows more small meeting rooms for 6–8 users. This is more useful than only a few large rooms, since many are studying or on Zoom. Still need a GREAT quiet study space as well with no accompanying noise."

"Do we actually need 6–7 meeting rooms? Doesn't seem very communal."

"I really like meeting rooms and study pods. From an 8th grader."

- Community Members

"Passport office makes no sense here. Move to nearby civic or office building. That space is needed for actual library usage."

- Community Member

2.7 Key Findings - Round 2

03 Final Conceptual Design

Better accommodate both active and quiet uses

Improve access for charging personal technology

Provide extended hours access

Provide family bathrooms at the children's area

Create efficiency with staff spaces

Flexibility

Improve accommodations for small group gatherings

Improve FOL work and sales spaces

Provide acoustically quiet private meeting spaces

Consider Inclusive Design

3.1 Design Goals

Holistic Update to Interior Finishes and Systems

Experience
-Acoustics
-Thermal Comfort
-Power Data Accessibility
-Visual Acuity/Lighting
-Accessibility

+

Smart and Efficient Moves with Interior Space

Layout
-Flexibility
-Improved Flow
-New Space Types
-Operational Efficiencies
-

=

Big Impact and Design Goals Realized

3.2 Achieving Design Goals

WHAT:

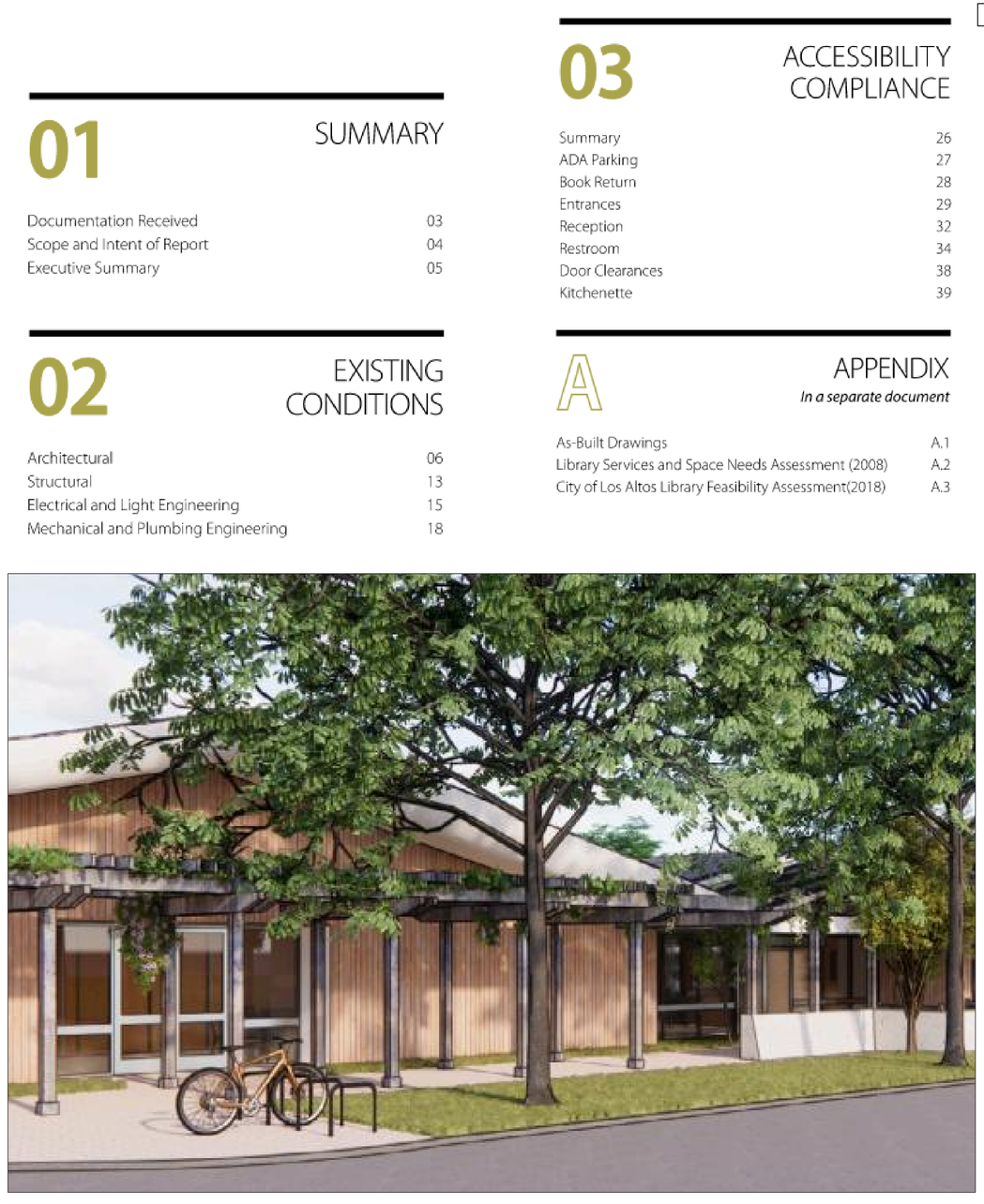
- Complete ***review of the existing*** building
- Report was created providing all findings

WHY:

- Provides ***foundation for developing design solutions*** that solve the operational / use needs
- Also targets key functional and building system upgrades that can be done in tandem and in coordination with overall improvements.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- ***Good*** structural ***bones***, but ***building is old***
- Aging building systems (HVAC, electrical, data)
- Accessibility improvements needed
- Improvements required regardless to keep building functioning



01 SUMMARY

Documentation Received 03
Scope and Intent of Report 04
Executive Summary 05

02 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Architectural 06
Structural 13
Electrical and Light Engineering 15
Mechanical and Plumbing Engineering 18

03 ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE

Summary 26
ADA Parking 27
Book Return 28
Entrances 29
Reception 32
Restroom 34
Door Clearances 38
Kitchenette 39

A APPENDIX
In a separate document

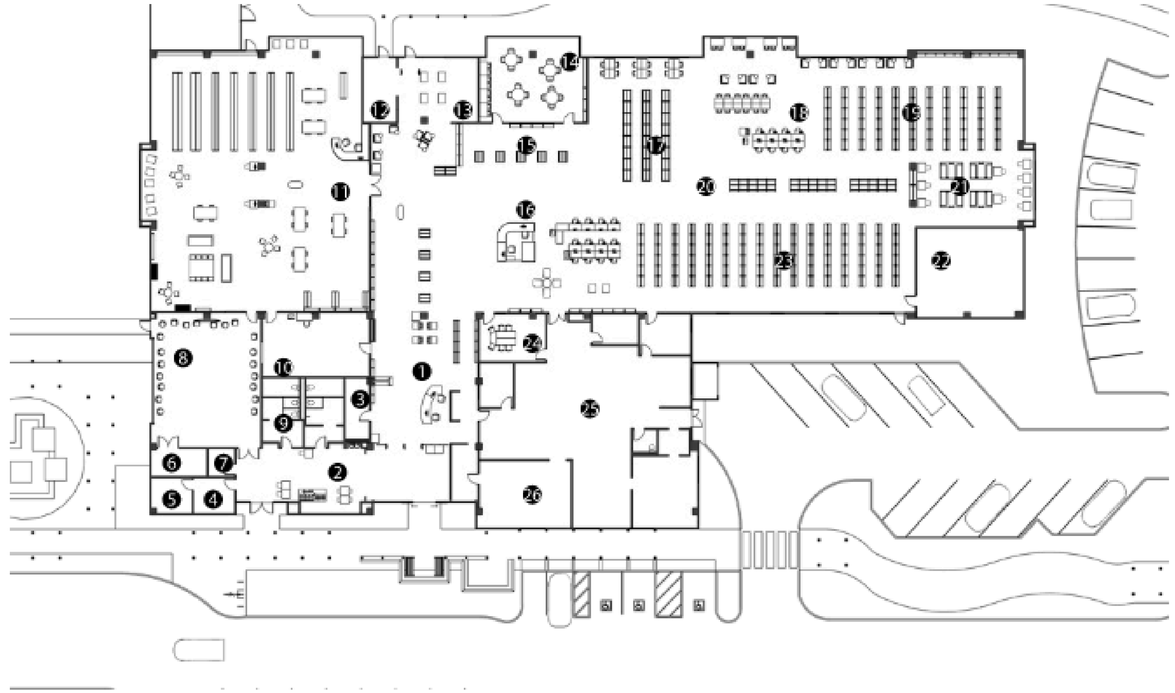
As-Built Drawings A.1
Library Services and Space Needs Assessment (2008) A.2
City of Los Altos Library Feasibility Assessment(2018) A.3

Existing Conditions Analysis

3.3 Deep Understanding of Existing Facility

STRUCTURAL

- The building is in good structural condition
- The original and expanded sections are supported by steel moment frames
- No major structural deficiencies were identified.



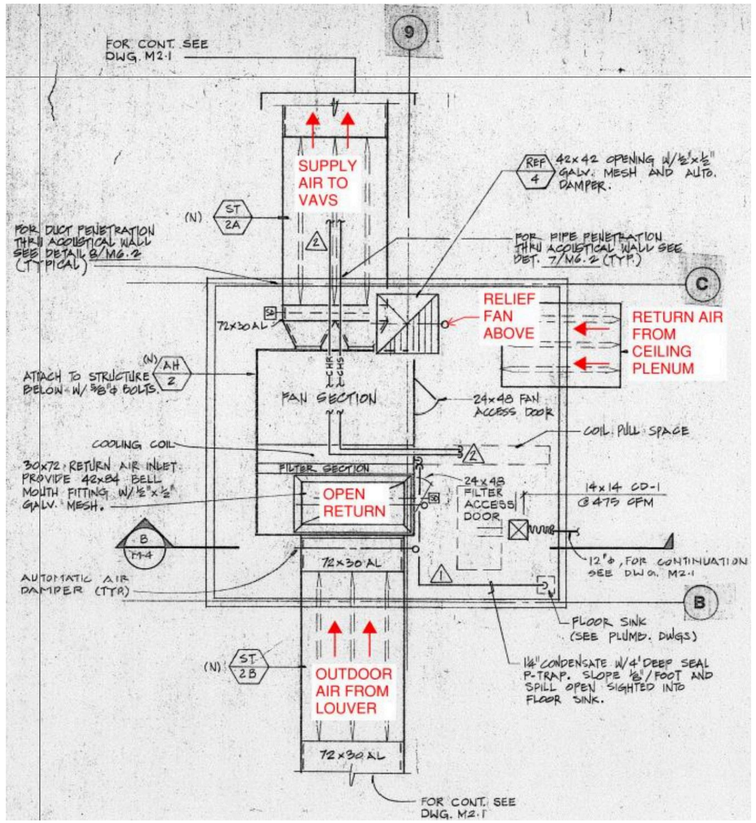
KEYNOTES

1	LOBBY	10	CHILDREN'S STAFF	19	FICTION
2	CAFE	11	CHILDREN'S ROOM	20	MUSIC
3	PASSPORT SERVICES	12	SERVICE ROOM	21	QUIET STUDY AREA
4	JANITOR'S ROOM	13	NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES	22	F.O.L
5	ELECTRICAL ROOM ADE	14	TEEN ROOM	23	NON - FICTION
6	AUDIO VISUAL	15	TEENS COLLECTION	24	MEETING
7	DONATIONS	16	REFERENCE DESK	25	STAFF
8	ORCHARD ROOM	17	MOVIES	26	LIBRARY RETURNS
9	RESTROOMS	18	STUDY AREA		

3.4 Holistic Updates

MECHANICAL (HVAC & PLUMBING)

- The existing HVAC and plumbing systems are functioning but aging
- Several mechanical components, such as the chilled and hot water pumps, are nearing the end of their service life and will be replaced.
- Mechanical control system upgrade to improve efficiency
- All new plumbing fixtures



3.5 Holistic Updates

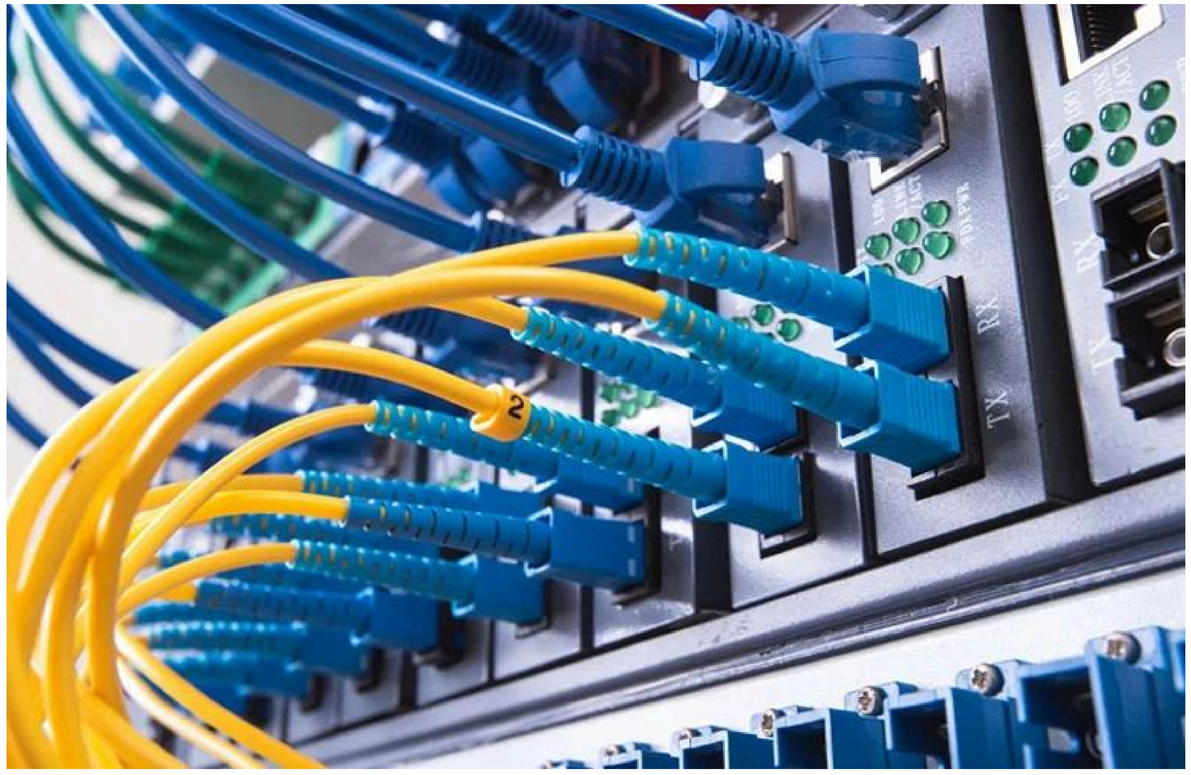
ELECTRICAL

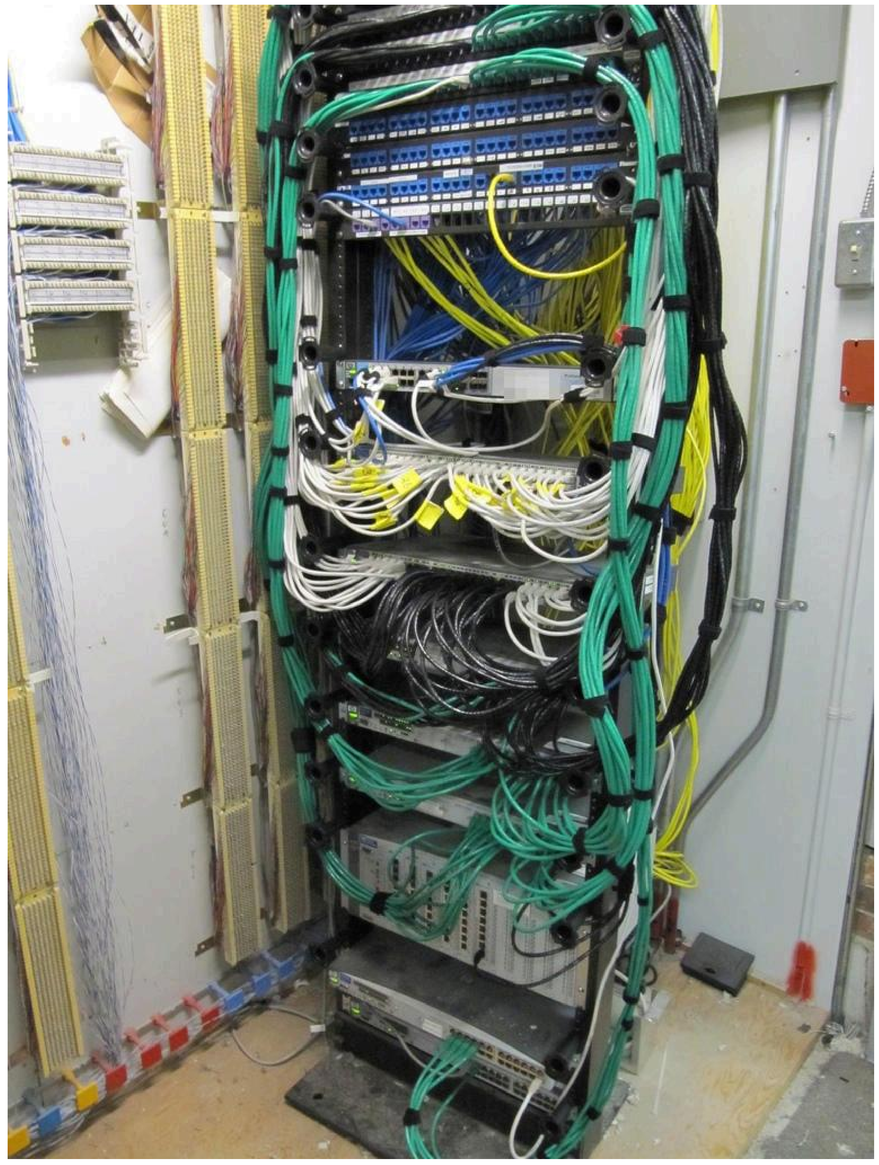
- High performance LED lighting throughout
- Energy compliant lighting controls
- Increased quantity of electrical receptacles with integrated USB-C charging ports
- Floor outlets to serve new powered furniture systems
- Egress lighting and fire alarm safety device improvements
- Exploring taking the building to full electrification (no reliance on natural gas), possible service upgrade

3.6 Holistic Updates

TELECOM & AV

- Updated public address speaker system
- New AV equipment throughout
- New data cable pathways for increased data service





3.7 Holistic Updates

ACCESSIBILITY

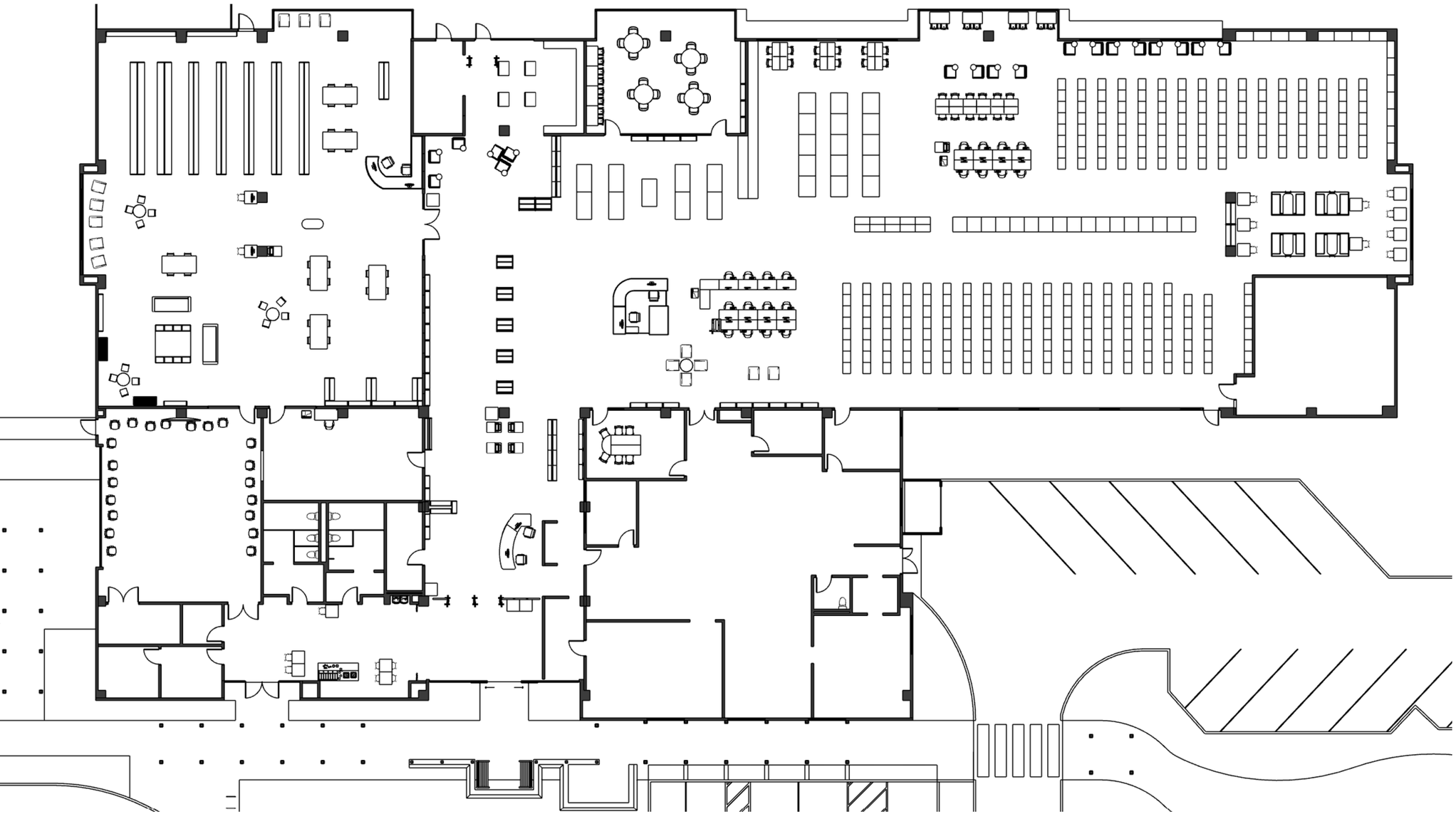
- Complete accessibility review performed
- Completely renovated restrooms to improve accessibility and with all new finishes and accessories
- Minor accessibility improvements planned to meet Code

3.8 Holistic Updates

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS

- New flooring finishes
- New wall finishes
- New ceiling finishes
- Acoustical wall and ceiling treatments
- Updated door hardware where needed to meet code requirements
- Improved staff work area layout and coordination with updated automated materials handling

3.9 Holistic Updates



3.10 Existing Floor Plan

Key Design Elements

- Full height glass wall divides active and quiet areas of the library and creates the ability for extended hours space
- Lobby and "marketplace" available for after hours use
- Lobby and "marketplace" can be designed to be flexible to accommodate events
- Holds shelves available in "marketplace"
- Staff maintains two service locations
- Staff is consolidated into one more efficiently designed staff workspace
- The teen room stays in its current location
- The community room stays in its current location
- Increased access to power for personal devices
- Reduction in shelving
- DVD's and periodicals to be relocated within the collection

Area 1

- **Maintains separate men's and women's restrooms**
- **One non-gendered restroom** off of main lobby for those who prefer it
- Two family restrooms off of children's area
- **Enclosed FOL sales space** in main lobby
  - FOL sales able to be secured during extended hours
  - FOL sales space can be accessed by FOL volunteers after hours if desired
- FOL café remains in lobby
- Seating in lobby
- Community room function and locations remains as is
- Interior lobby bookdrop remains
- New multi-use room for programming, etc.

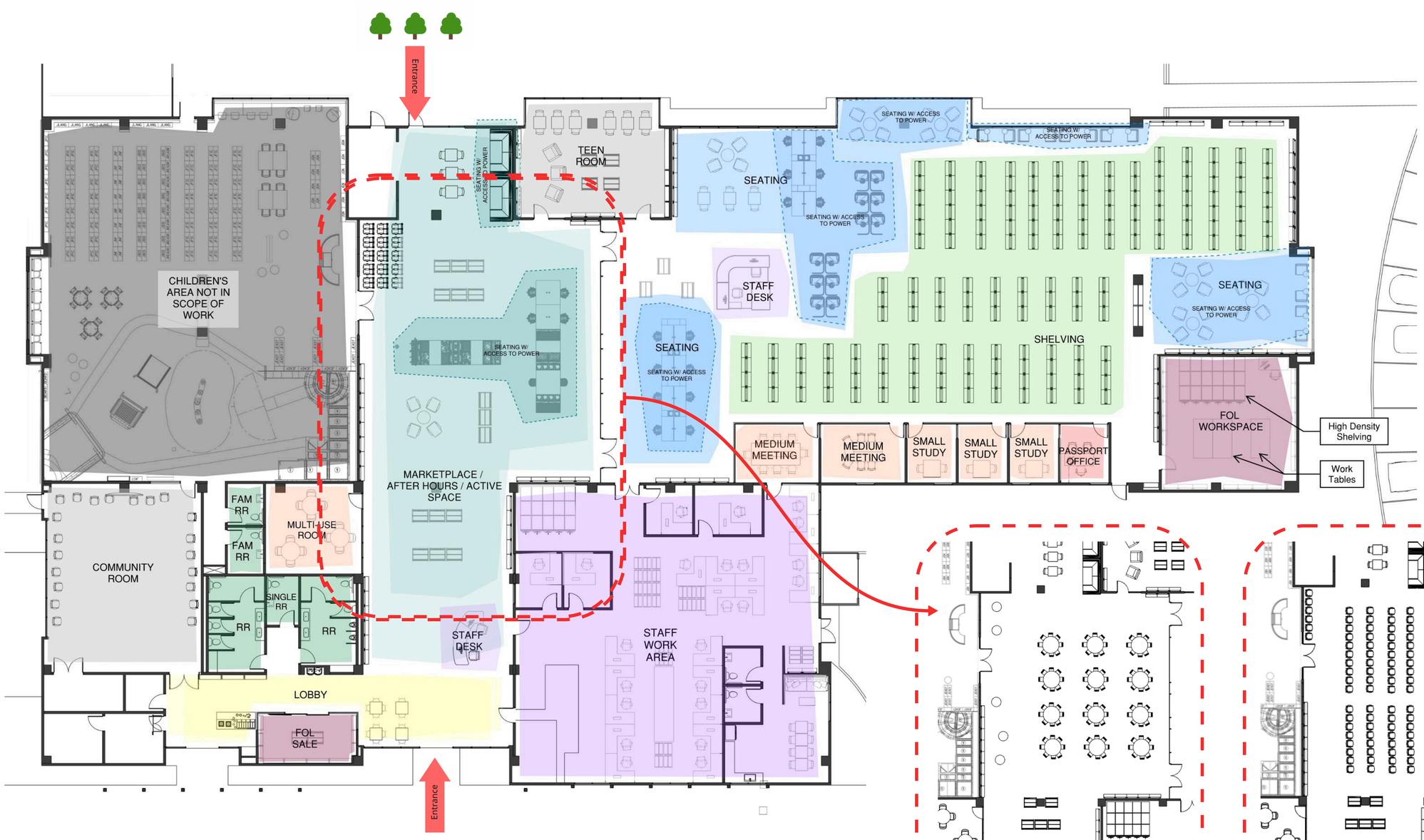
Area 2

- **FOL maintains existing workspace location**
- FOL maintains close access to back door
- FOL workspace can be made more acoustically sound
- FOL workspace can fit more seamlessly into the architectural design
- Acoustically private study/meeting/quiet rooms are provided (3) small, (2) medium (can be shared by staff when needed)
- Passport office is maintained

Area 3

- 19 Workstations
  - All FT staff have their own workstations
  - Addt'l workstations for PT staff
- All staff that require offices will have one
- One additional staff restroom will be added
- High Density shelving for storage will be more efficient
- Location of AMH remains with some modifications
- Maintains both entrances to staff space
- Maintains flexible open area for carts
- Medium meeting room accessible from staff area can be used for staff meetings but is primarily for community use
- Staff break room size reduced

3.11 Conceptual Floor Plan



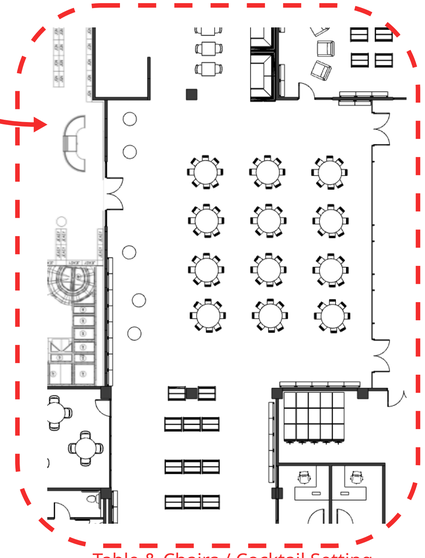
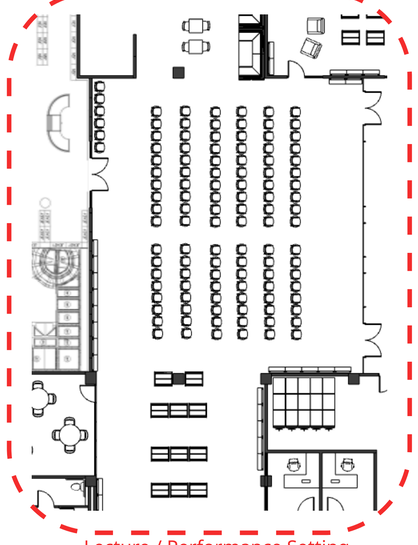


Table & Chairs / Cocktail Setting



Lecture / Performance Setting

3.12 "Marketplace" Flexibility

Conceptual Renderings

Provides better understanding of proposed floor plan design changes by illustrating key eye level views of the space.

Not intended to be realistic and/or representative of final colors and finishes, but to show overall layout and spatial quality.

View Key Plan

3.13 Community Marketplace

View Key Plan

3.14 Community Marketplace

View Key Plan

3.15 Quiet Area & Collections

View Key Plan

3.16 Quiet Area & Collections

View Key Plan

3.17 Friends of the Library Book Sale

View Key Plan

3.18 Exterior of FOL Work Space

View Key Plan

3.19 Exterior of FOL Work Space

View Key Plan

3.20 Meeting Rooms (View 1)

View Key Plan

3.21 Meeting Rooms (View 2)

View Key Plan

3.22 Renderings

5

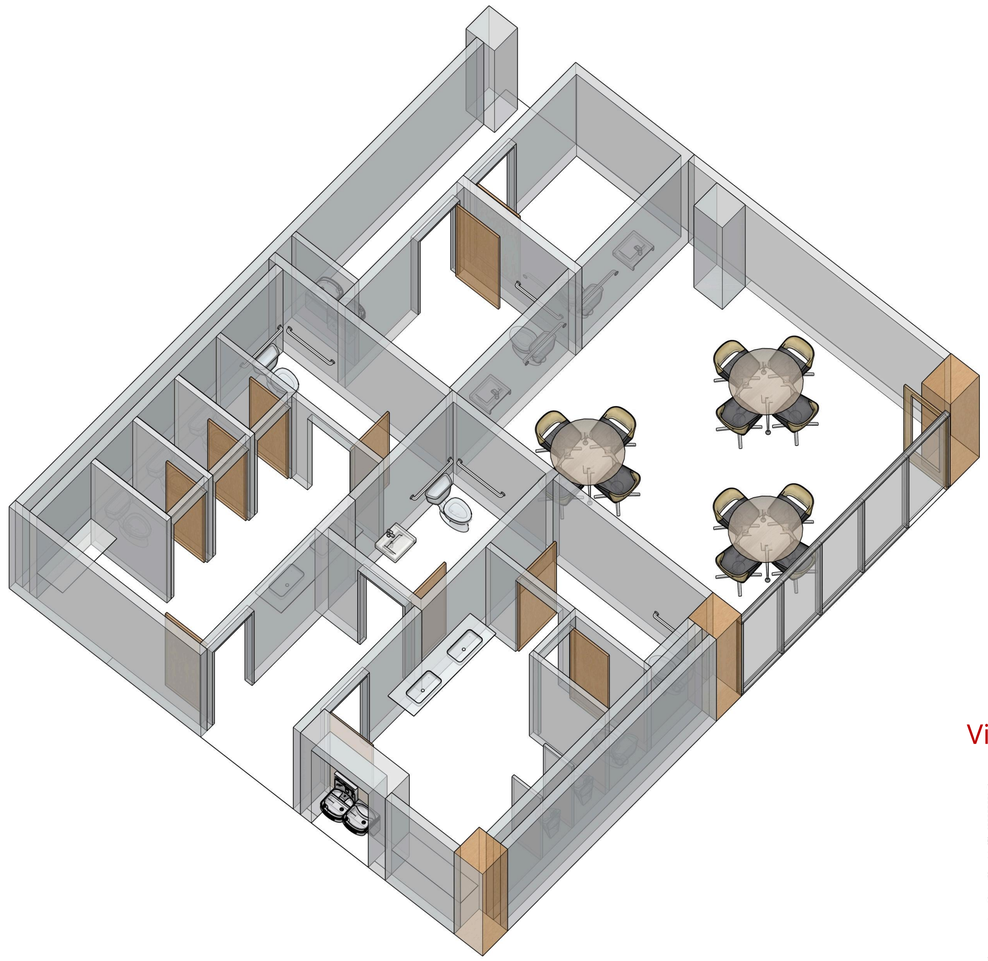
6

7

8

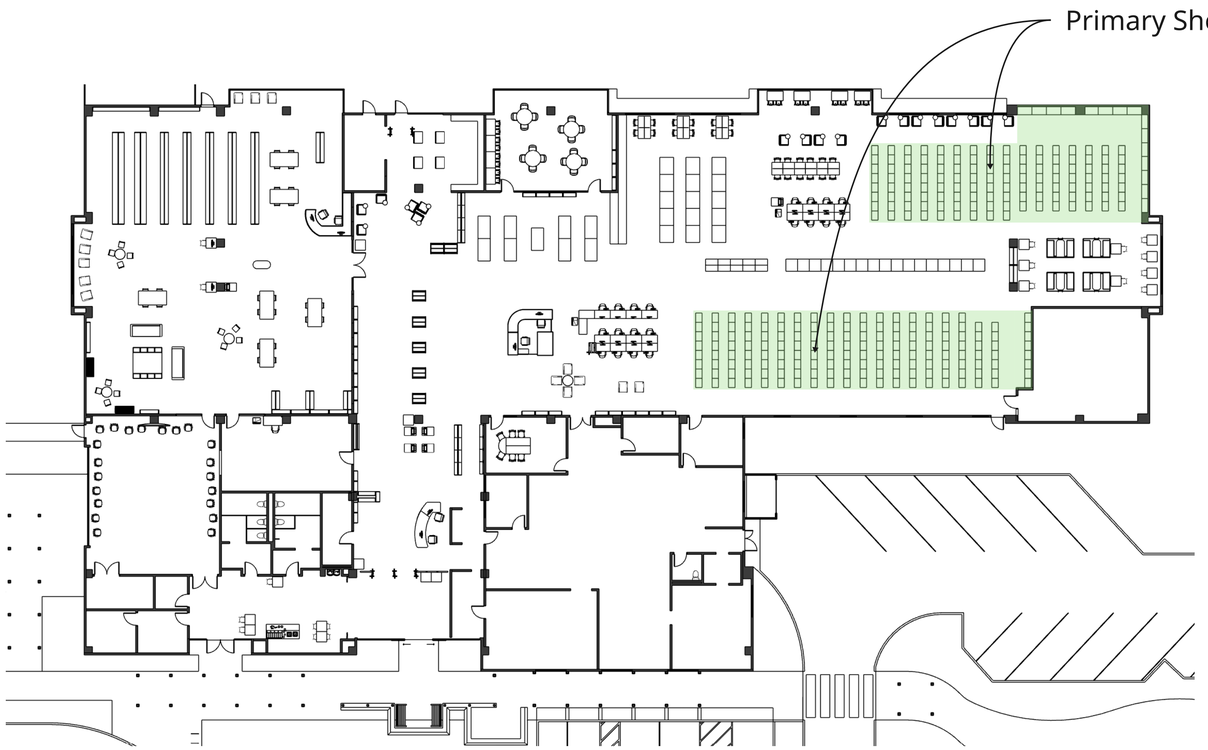
3.23 Renderings

View Key Plan



3.24 Restroom Core

View Key Plan



Existing Plan

Proposed Plan

Goals

- Balance space for collections with space for people and activities
- Further study with SCCLD and library is required to achieve targeted collection reduction

3.25 Primary Shelving & Collections Study

04 Conceptual Cost Model

FACTOR OF TIME (ESCALATION)

Hard Costs ~70%

Bid Award Costs
-Brick & Mortar Construction Costs
-General Conditions
-Contractor's Costs
-Contingencies for Variables (i.e. design, construction, unforseens)

+

Soft Costs ~30%

Costs Required to Deliver Project
-Design & Engineering Costs
-Permitting Fees
-Owner's Consultants
-Testing & Inspections
-Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment
-Financing Costs
-Moving & Relocation Costs
-Construction (CO) Contingency

=

Total Project Costs 100%

4.1 Costs and Budgeting

- The ***final design*** with all elements identified and detailed is ***not yet created***.
- The conceptual cost model is not based on a set of drawings and specifications, but is ***based on*** initial ***concept plans, renderings,*** and qualitative ***narrative***.
- This is ***not a final estimate*** of detailed construction costs.
- The ***purpose is to allow for early budgeting*** and scope to target ***budget alignment***.

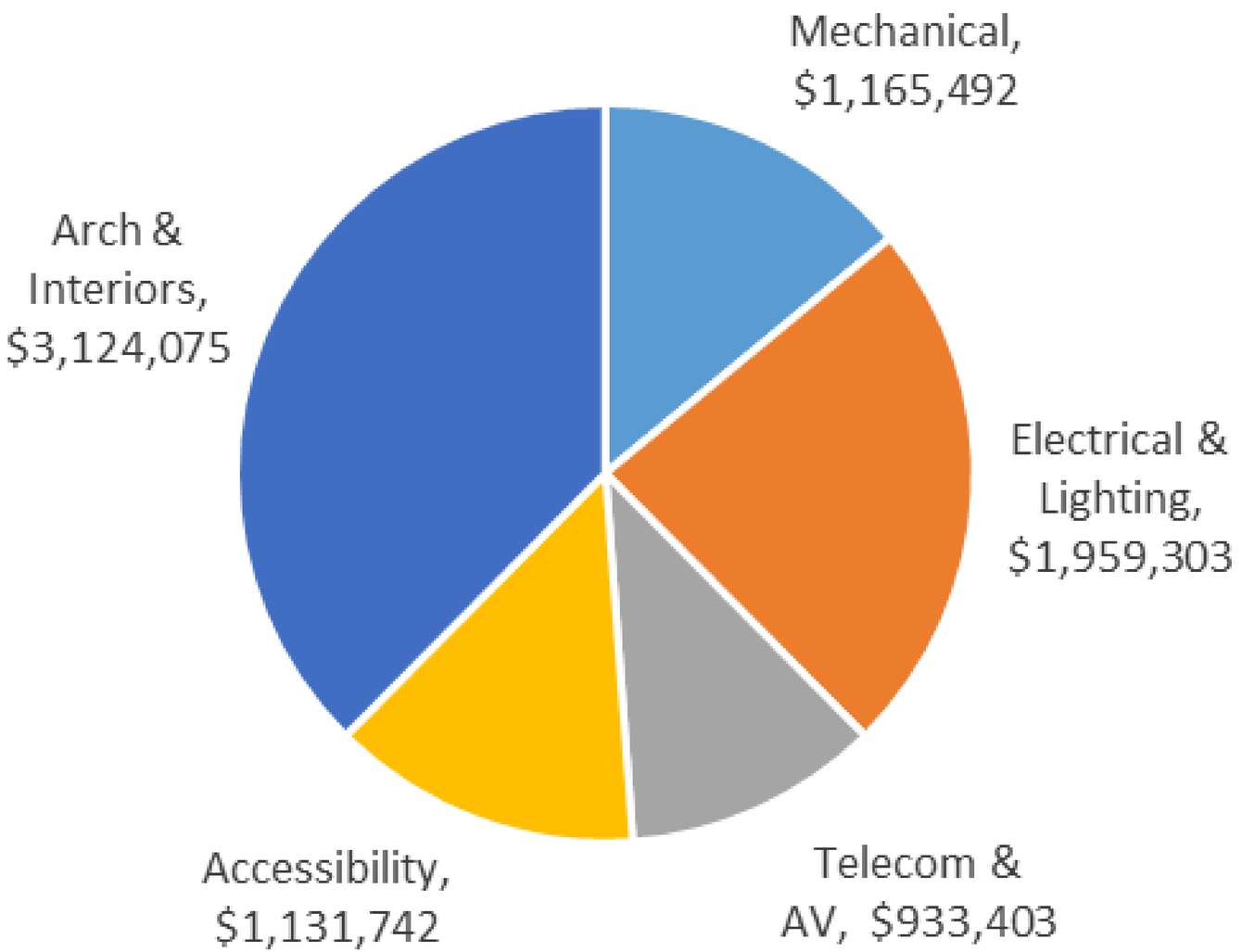
Key Assumptions

Assumes a hard bid (Design bid build)
Construction start in September 2026
Construction finish in November 2027
Selective Building Demolition (interior only)
Single phase construction*

Exclusions

Furniture & Equipment (incl. HD shelving)
Hazardous Materials Abatement
AV Equipment
Seismic Upgrades
Relocation and temporary facilities
Project labor agreement requirements

4.2 What is Conceptual Cost Modeling?



CONCEPTUAL DESIGN COSTS

Base Hard Costs: $8.314 M
Electrification/Decarb: $498 k

TOTAL: $8.812 M

4.3 Conceptual Cost Estimate Summary

Phasing Considerations

- Construction logic / efficiency
- Impact to operations
- Prioritize highest used spaces
- By area/space (multiple disciplines)
- By construction scope elements (single discipline) (i.e. finishes, HVAC, etc.)
- Work from inside out

Potential Phase Locations

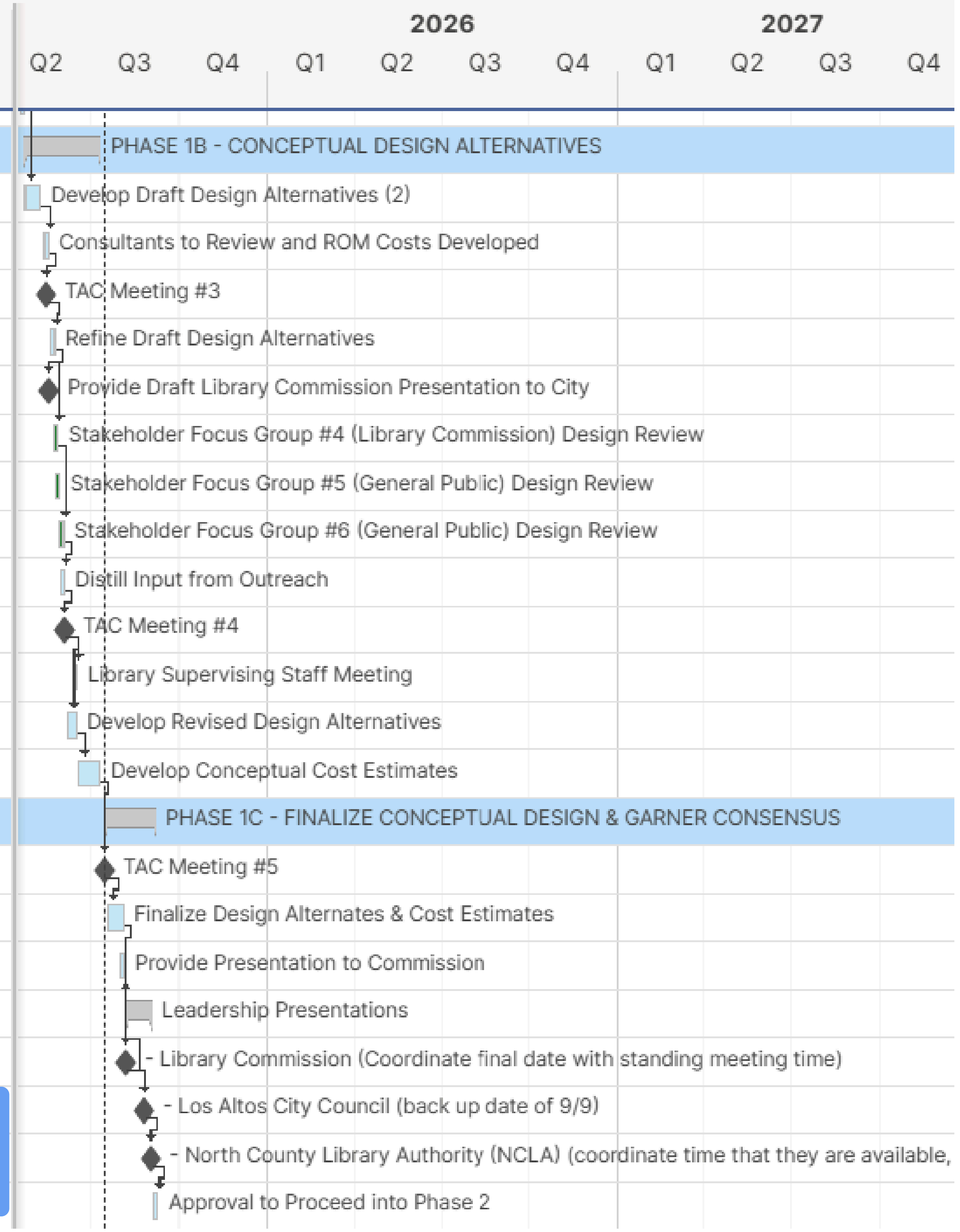
1. Lobby and Restrooms
2. Community Marketplace
3. Meeting Rooms
4. Staff Work Area
5. Collections and Seating Areas
6. Teen Room
7. FOL Workspace
8. Orchard Room

Discussion & Direction

4.4 Phasing

05 Conclusion & Next steps

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
PHASE 1B - CONCEPTUAL DESIGN ALTERNATIVES	59d	04/22/25	07/11/25
~~Develop Draft Design Alternatives (2)~~	~~14d~~	~~04/22/25~~	~~05/09/25~~
~~Consultants to Review and ROM Costs Developed~~	~~5d~~	~~05/12/25~~	~~05/16/25~~
~~**TAC Meeting #3**~~	~~0~~	~~05/16/25~~	~~05/16/25~~
~~Refine Draft Design Alternatives~~	~~1d~~	~~05/19/25~~	~~05/19/25~~
~~Provide Draft Library Commission Presentation to City~~	~~0~~	~~05/19/25~~	~~05/19/25~~
~~Stakeholder Focus Group #4 (Library Commission) Design Review~~	1d	05/22/25	05/22/25
~~Stakeholder Focus Group #5 (General Public) Design Review~~	1d	05/24/25	05/24/25
~~Stakeholder Focus Group #6 (General Public) Design Review~~	~~1d~~	~~05/28/25~~	~~05/28/25~~
~~Distill Input from Outreach~~	~~5d~~	~~05/29/25~~	~~06/04/25~~
~~**TAC Meeting #4**~~	~~0~~	~~06/04/25~~	~~06/04/25~~
~~Library Supervising Staff Meeting~~	1d	06/11/25	06/11/25
~~Develop Revised Design Alternatives~~	~~7d~~	~~06/06/25~~	~~06/16/25~~
~~Develop Conceptual Cost Estimates~~	~~19d~~	~~06/17/25~~	~~07/11/25~~
PHASE 1C - FINALIZE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN & GARNER CONSENSUS	37d	07/16/25	09/05/25
TAC Meeting #5	0	07/16/25	07/16/25
Finalize Design Alternates & Cost Estimates	13d	07/17/25	08/04/25
Provide Presentation to Commission	1d	07/30/25	07/30/25
Leadership Presentations	18d	08/07/25	09/02/25
- Library Commission (Coordinate final date with standing meeting time)	0	08/07/25	08/07/25
- Los Altos City Council (back up date of 9/9)	0		
- North County Library Authority (NCLA) (coordinate time that they are available, no stand	0		
Approval to Proceed into Phase 2	3d		



We are here!

Final Dates TBD

5.1 Schedule & Next Steps

August 2025 Library Report
Jennifer Weeks, County Librarian

Preparing for Back to School

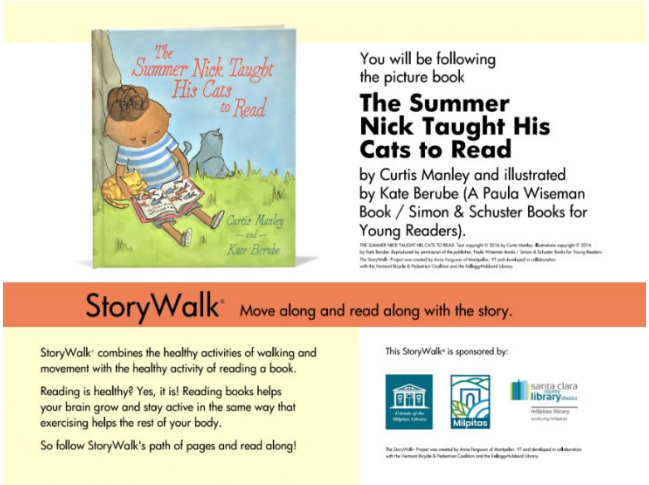
Children are headed back to school this month and our libraries are here to help them excel. For those just starting their scholastic adventures, our **Get Ready for Kindergarten** online resource site offers six skillset specific pages for them to practice the essentials. Each contains a checklist by topic and a booklist. The library also offers programs for young children, eResources for kids and helpful website links for kids, parents and caregivers.

Our 24/7 Online Library has a **Kids' page** and a **Teens' page** with access to great resources like tutoring through **Brainfuse**, homework help with **Learning Express**, news from **Scholastic**, **encyclopedias** and bios about historic figures, language learning through **Rosetta Stone**, research from journal articles, and much more. Kids have access to their own collection of eBooks, audiobooks, and eMagazines through **Libby**, as well as movies and TV shows through **Kanopy Kids**. Our librarians also have suggested **books for each grade**.

SCCLD supports parents and caregivers of little ones with **1000 books before 6**, where they can earn prizes! Our talented children's librarians offer book lists, tips, logs and more. Students at partner schools within our service area automatically receive a digital library membership, or "Student **eAccount"** which they can use through the student **web portal**. August is also **National Immunization Awareness Month**, and the Santa Clara County Board of Education reminds parents and caregivers that they can easily schedule vaccinations for children 6 months and older with their primary physicians or **through the County.** They can review their child's vaccine records through the **state's digital portal**.

Collect Your Summer Reading Prizes

Thank you to the thousands of people who took time to **Level Up at Your Library**. Those who completed the tasks in the Summer Reading Challenge can pick up their prizes all month at any SCCLD library or Bookmobile stop (while supplies last). We still have **several events** left during August for you to enjoy.



Dog Days of Summer, StoryWalk®

August may be known as the dog days of summer, but our new StoryWalk® title is all about felines. Curtis Manley's ***The Summer Nick Taught His Cats to Read*** is the current featured story at our four sites, all located within city parks.

- **Jack Fischer Park** in Campbell
- **Kevin Moran Park** in Saratoga
- **Murphy Park** in Milpitas
- **Community Park** in Morgan Hill

A new Gilroy StoryWalk® is in the final planning stages at Christmas Hill Park.

StoryWalk® was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Vermont. These interactive displays include pages taken directly from a children's book and installed along an outdoor path. StoryWalks are a great way to develop early literacy skills and promote physical activity with our youngest readers.

Working Together to Keep Our Communities Safe

Started in 1984 as a way to strengthen the bond between local law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve, **National Night Out** is held on the first Tuesday evening in August. This year it falls on August 5. Several of our libraries are taking part.

Gilroy- 4:30 to 8 PM, 350 W. 6th Street, Gilroy 95020. Takes place on the Grassy Paseo between the Gilroy Library and City Hall.

Los Altos- 6 to 9 PM, 97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos 94022. Los Altos Community Center.

Morgan Hill- 5 to 7:30 PM, 17575 Peak Avenue, Morgan Hill 95037. Civic Center Plaza.

The **County Sheriff's office** is attending many National Night Out events. They and other local law enforcement agencies are tracking other neighborhood-based events and will post locations and times closer to the date of National Night Out.

August Virtual Author Talks

A trio of guests join us this month for insightful online discussions. We begin on Tue., August 5 with Jay Falk of the Smithsonian's Tropical Research Institute. He will share ***The Bird Book: The Stories, Science, and History of Birds***. Learn about these living dinosaurs and how they have evolved into the varied and wonderful creatures we appreciate today. **Please register**.

Sparks fly in novelist **Casey's McQuiston's** ***The Pairing***, a romantic comedy set in Europe. Two childhood friends with a past history reconnect while on a tour. Her talk is on Wed., August 20. **Please register**.

Hear research-based recommendations for how to best adjust to the many pressures of life from **Dr. Tasha Eurich** on Thu., August 28. Author of ***Shatterproof: How to Thrive in a World of Constant Chaos***, True resilience is not just about endurance. **Please register**.

ESL Classes Starting Up Soon

Several of our libraries offer **classes** for English as a Second Language, as well as English conversation clubs. Two days a week classes begin Mon. and Wed., August 17 and 19 at the Gilroy Library, Mon. and Wed. August 25 and 27 at the Milpitas Library, Wed. and Mon., October 1 and 6 at the Saratoga Library, and Thu. and Tue., October 2 and 7 at the Los Altos Library.

Classes are intended for beginning and intermediate students 18 years and older and run for over two months, with participants expected to attend all dates. Those interested in taking part **should register**. Those with a passion for helping others discover the joy of language are invited to apply to **volunteer**.

Another opportunity to help improve literacy is to become a Reading Program tutor. Adults 18 and older who can read at a high school level or above and can commit to at least two hours a week of tutoring for six months (with flexible scheduling) are eligible. The Gilroy Library is holding a two-part training starting on August 6. Those interested should **contact the Reading Program**. There are also training sessions in September and October at the Cupertino and Gilroy libraries and virtual sessions in November.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT
AUGUST 2025 EVENTS

Summer Reading programs are highlighted in blue.

CAMPBELL EXPRESS LIBRARY – 1 West Campbell Ave., Room 46

CUPERTINO -- 10800 Torre Avenue

Knit-Alongs at Cupertino Library
Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, 2:30 – 4 p.m., Room 201A
All knitters and crocheters are welcome to drop in and socialize while starting new projects or finishing old ones. Participants need to bring their own needles and/or crochet hooks and yarn. No personal instruction will be provided.

中/英文雙語說故事時間/Mandarin-English Bilingual Family Storytime
Fridays, August 1 & 15, 7 – 8 p.m. and 8 – 9 p.m., Room 101
Join us for stories, songs, a flannel board story, and a craft project in Mandarin and English. Children and their caretakers are welcome to join. 兒童圖書館員將為小朋友讀圖畫故事書;唱兒歌;用絨布板講故事;手指謠和做美勞。歡迎幼兒們 和家長,褓母一同前來參加。

Family Storytime
Saturdays, August 2, 9, & 16, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Program Room
This storytime is suitable for all ages and will feature stories, songs, rhymes and dances that encourage the development of early literacy skills. Storytime is limited to the first 100 families. Bring a yoga mat or blanket to sit on.

Babywearing Dance
Sundays, August 3 & 10, 11 – 11:30 a.m.
Join us for babywearing dance.

Baby Sign and Sing
Sunday, August 3, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Room 101
Babies aged 0-12 months and adult caregivers will learn basic signs to communicate.

STEAMini Camp (Grades 1-2)
Monday, August 4, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Room 101
Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning skills will be developed through this project-based program. Online registration is required.

Toddler Storytime (ages 1-2)
Tuesdays, August 5 & 12, 10:30 – 11 a.m.
This storytime will feature stories, songs, rhymes and dances that encourage the development of early literacy skills.

ESL Conversation Club
Tuesdays, August 5, 12, 19, & 26, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Room 201A
Improve your English listening and speaking skills in a supportive environment. This program is for adults who speak basic English. Register online.

Claymation Film Workshop (ages 4-14)
Tuesday & Wednesday, August 5 & 6, 2 – 4 p.m.
Discover the art of filmmaking through this fun and interactive Claymation workshop. Led by industry experts, participants will gain hands-on experience in character development, storytelling, and stop-motion animation—all while exploring the creative process from a filmmaker's perspective. Register online.

Afternoon Meditation and Mindfulness
Wednesdays, August 6, 13, 20, & 27, 4:30 – 5 p.m., Room 201A
Practice meditation for 20 minutes then ask questions for 10 minutes with the instructor.

Bedtime Storytime
Wednesdays, August 6 & 13, 7 – 7:30 p.m., Program Room
This storytime is suitable for all ages and will feature stories, songs, rhymes and dances that encourage early literacy skills. Seating is limited to the first 100 families. Bring a yoga mat or blanket to sit on.

Storytime for Babies (ages 0-1)
Thursdays, August 7 & 14, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., First Floor Program Room
This storytime features stories and songs that encourage the development of early literacy skills. Storytime is limited to the first 30 babies with a maximum of 2 adults per family.

Reading Buddies (Grades K-5)
Thursday, August 7 and Monday, August 11, 7 – 8 p.m., Room 101
Children can buddy up with a furry friend and read one-on-one from a favorite book. Children must register themselves in-person at the Children's Reference Desk.

Art Therapy for Tweens
Friday, August 8, 4 – 5 p.m., Room 101
Kids aged 10+ can create their own unique piece of art to take home. Space is limited, please arrive on time.

CU Creates: Collaborative Watercolor Painting
Friday, August 8, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Room 201
All materials and instruction will be provided. Please register online.

Retro Roadshow: Mario Through the Ages
Saturday, August 9, 2 – 5 p.m.
Delve into an interactive presentation tracing the evolution of video game art and science through the lens of Nintendo's iconic "Mario" character. Then explore a range of classic video game consoles featuring nearly five decades of Mario-centric games.

Dentist Storytime
Sunday, August 10, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Room 101
Dr. Ng will read fun books, sing songs, and share healthy habits for keeping our teeth strong and clean.

Nonfiction Book Discussion
Sunday, August 10, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Room 201
We will discuss Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Clay Art (For Ages 3-5)
Monday, August 11, 11 – 11:45 a.m., Room 101
We will use colored clay to make Picasso inspired placemats. Caregivers will be helping their child mold clay into shapes. All supplies are provided but limited.

Children's Literature for Adults Book Club
Tuesday, August 12, 7 – 8 p.m.
Adults will discuss, reminisce, or discover a beloved children's classic. Please register at the Children's Reference Desk. This program is for adults only.

Adult Drawing Class
Wednesday, August 11, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Room 201A
Our August Adult Drawing Class will focus on drawing animals. All materials will be provided. Seating is limited, and on a first come, first served basis.

Origami for School Aged Children
Thursday, August 14, 4 – 5 p.m.
Learn to fold three different projects. Origami paper will be provided.

Book Discussion for Adults
Wednesday, August 20, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and Thursday, August 21, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Room 201B
We will discuss Go as a River by Shelley Read.

Happy Hollow Park and Zoo
Wednesday, August 20, 4 – 5 p.m., Room 101
Meet live animal ambassadors and learn how wild animals live and defend themselves.

Firefighter Storytime
Thursday, August 21, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Room 101
Learn safety tips from a firefighter and listen to a storytime, then tour a fire truck. Please note: Firefighters are "in service" and may need to leave to respond to a 9-1-1 call.

Hula Show with Halau O' Pi'ilani
Saturday, August 23, 10:30 – 11 a.m.
Families are invited to join us for a hula show featuring a medley of songs!

Teen Cents Financial Literacy Workshop
Saturday, August 23, 4 – 6 p.m., Room 201
You'll learn how to budget, spend wisely, understand credit, save smartly, and spot scams before they get you. Discover how compound interest works, get the basics of investing, and explore practical ways to earn money.

LIKHA-Pilipino Folk Ensemble
Sunday, August 24, 2 – 3 p.m., Room 101
LIKHA is a performing dance company which aims to share the beauty of Philippine folk dance and music. All ages welcome.

Tuesday Travel Nights: Mongolia
Tuesday, August 26, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Room 201A
See the lakes, forests, steppes, and Gobi Desert in the most sparsely populated nation in the world.

Arabic Belly Dance
Sunday, August 31, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Room 201A
Immerse yourself in the captivating world of Arabic dance with a vibrant and interactive performance, followed by a dance lesson open to everyone.

GILROY -- 350 W. Sixth Street

Seed Kits
Friday, August 1 – Sunday, August 31, Adult Information Desk
Pick up a packet of Golden Detroit Beet seeds, and a brochure about how to care for the plant, recommended book pairings, and a tasty recipe.

Gilroy Library Teen Advisory Board Applications Open
Friday, August 1 – Sunday, August 31, Adult Information Desk
The Teen Advisory Board provides ideas and input about library programs and services for teens. TAB members work on special projects throughout the year with guidance from the Teen Services Librarian.

Book Discussion
Friday, August 1, 10:15 – 11:15 a.m., Upstairs Quiet Study B
We will discuss Plan A by Deb Caletti.

WERC's Birds of Prey
Friday, August 1, 2 – 3 p.m., Community Room
You will meet some beautiful birds, then see and touch materials they use for flight, sight, hearing, and other adaptations.
Tendrás la oportunidad de conocer algunas aves hermosas, así como ver y tocar materiales que utilizan para volar, ver, oír y otras adaptaciones.

Safe Space Meet-Up for LGBTQ+ Youth (ages 13-25)
Fridays, August 1 & 15, 4 – 5:30 p.m., Quiet Study B
Our staff-led meetings offer a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and ally (LGBTQ+) youth to play games, participate in group activities and discussions, and build community. No registration necessary.

Cascada de Flores
Saturday, August 2, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Community Room
Cascada de Flores transports audiences on a humorous and joyous journey through the heart of Latin America. Cascada de Flores transporta al público en un viaje lleno de humor y alegría por el corazón de América Latina.

Un-Bee-Livably Delicious: Cooking Dinner with Honey
Saturday, August 2, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Community Room
This program will guide you through creating a complete and delicious dinner, highlighting the unique flavors honey can bring to every course. Discover exciting techniques and flavor pairings that will elevate your weeknight meals and impress your guests.

Claymation Film Workshop (ages 4-14)
Sundays, August 3 & 10, 2 – 4 p.m.
Led by industry experts, participants will gain hands-on experience in character development, storytelling, and stop-motion animation—all while exploring the creative process from a filmmaker's perspective. This is a two-part workshop. Please register if you can attend both.

1-on-1 Tech Help/Ayuda con la Tecnología
Mondays, August 4, 11, 18, & 25, 1 – 5 p.m., Computer Area Upstairs
Drop by to get help with opening an email account, connect to Wi-Fi/hotspots, use laptops/Chromebooks, and use Microsoft Office.
Ellos pueden ayudarte: abrir una cuenta de correo electrónico, conéctese a Wi-Fi/puntos de acceso, Utilice computadoras portátiles/Chromebooks y utilice Microsoft Office.

Pajama Storytime/Cuentas en Pijama
Mondays, August 4, 11, 18, & 25, 7 – 8 p.m., the Nest
Join us for stories, sing songs, and wear your pajamas! Lee cuentos, canta canciones y ponte el pijama para una hora de cuentos para niños de todas las edades.

Animals & Their Adaptations
Tuesday, August 5, 2 – 3 p.m., Community Room
Examine a variety of live animals. Learn about diet, habitat, ecological role, structure, and function. Examina animales vivos de una variedad de grupos taxonómicos. Aprende sobre su alimentación, hábitat, rol ecológico, estructura y función.

Zumba at the Library
Tuesdays, August 5, 12, 19, & 26, 5:45 – 6:45 p.m., Community Room
Join us for an easy-to-follow dance that works all major muscle groups in a high-energy cardio blast. No registration required. Únase a nosotros para un entrenamiento gratuito basado en baile y ritmo. No es necesario registrarse.

Reading Program Orientation
Wednesday, August 6, 1 – 2 p.m. and 6 – 7 p.m., Reading Program Room
Give back to your community by becoming a literacy tutor to support an adult learner improve their English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills to achieve their lifelong goals. Register now to attend the orientation to learn more about the Reading Program.

Family Storytime/Hora de Cuentos
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Children's Area
Join us for fun stories, rhymes, fingerplays, and songs to nurture early literacy skills. Compartiremos historias divertidas, rimas, y canciones.

Knitting and Crochet Weekly Meetup/Tejido Semanal
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 1 – 4 p.m., Upstairs Quiet Study B
Bring your projects, ask questions, get help, share ideas and meet new people. ¡Trae tus proyectos, haz preguntas, recibe ayuda, comparte ideas y conoce gente nueva!

Start Smart: Driver Safety for Teens & Parents
Thursday, August 7, 3 – 5 p.m., Community Room
Start Smart is aimed at helping newly licensed (or soon to be licensed) teen drivers become more aware of the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of being a licensed California driver.

Bilingual Storytime: English & Spanish/Hora de Cuentos Bilingüe: Inglés y Español
Saturdays, August 9, 16, 23, & 30, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., the Nest
Join us for stories and songs in English and Spanish, followed by music and playtime. Acompáñenos a escuchar cuentos y canciones en inglés y español, seguido por música y tiempo para jugar.

Community Playdate with Little Heroes
Saturday, August 9, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Paseo
Outside of the library, in the Paseo area, join us for games and activities for all ages. Justo afuera de la biblioteca en el paseo disfrute de juegos y actividades para todas las edades.

Level up Your Cosplay
Saturday, August 9, 2 – 3:30 p.m., Community Room
If you are new to cosplay or have dabbled in the past, learn how to build simple prop pieces out of cardboard. Gain new skills to create spectacular cosplay accessories on a budget. No experience needed. Walk-ins welcome as space allows. Register to reserve your spot.

Open Poetry Readings
Saturday, August 9, 3:30 – 5 p.m., Downstairs Meeting Room
Read whatever poetry you want to read and join in related discussions.

Family Literacy Club: Decorate a Book Bag
Tuesday, August 12, 1 – 2 p.m., Community Room
Prepare for the upcoming school year by decorating a book bag and learning about helpful resources that are available through the library! All supplies will be provided. No registration required but limited spots are available.

Pastel & Charcoal Drawing Class/Clase de Dibujo al Pastel y Carboncillo
Saturday, August 15, 2 – 4 p.m., Community Room
All adult & teen artists are welcome. No experience necessary! All supplies will be provided. Register to reserve your spot. Walk-ins welcome, space permitting. Todos los artistas, adultos y adolescentes, son bienvenidos. ¡No se requiere experiencia! Se proporcionarán todos los materiales. Se aceptan visitas sin cita previa, siempre que haya espacio. Regístrese para reservar su lugar.

Book Discussion
Sunday, August 24, 3 – 4:30 p.m., Courtyard
Sustainable food advocate Peter Ruddock will lead a discussion on the book Barons: Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry by Austin Frerick.

ESL Class Session/Sesión de clase de inglés
Mondays & Wednesdays, Starting August 25, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Reading Program Room
Join us to learn and improve your English listening and speaking skills. This class session is for beginners. You should plan to attend the entire class session. Únase a nosotros para aprender y mejorar sus habilidades de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral en inglés. Esta clase es para principiantes. Le recomendamos asistir a todas las sesiones.

An Adventure in South Africa and Victoria Falls
Monday, August 25, 7 – 8 p.m., Community Room
Explore Cape Town's complex history and dramatic natural beauty, ride a train on the Rovos Rail to Victoria Falls and an open-air safari jeep at Chobe National Park to see magnificent wildlife. All are welcome to attend.

Book Discussion for Adults
Tuesday, August 26, 7 – 8 p.m., Quiet Study B
We will be discussing West with Giraffes by Lydia Rutledge.

Author Visit: CF Villa
Saturday, August 30, 12 – 1 p.m., Community Room
Villa will discuss his book, To Whom it May Concern. The talk will be followed by a book signing.

LOS ALTOS -- 13 S. San Antonio Road

Art From Chaos (ages 3+)
Friday, August 1, 2 – 4 p.m., Orchard Room
From scrapbook paper, foam sheets, and fabric to googly eyes, popsicle sticks, and stickers, choose from a wide variety of supplies to create something unique! Please bring an adult crafting buddy.

Baby Sign and Stay & Play
Saturday, August 2, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Orchard Room
Babies ages 0-12 months and their grownups are welcome to sing songs and learn signs to share with your baby. Please bring a blanket for your baby. After storytime, stay and play with age-appropriate toys.

Monday Morning Meditation and Mindfulness
Mondays, August 4, 11, 18, & 25, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Orchard Room
Practice meditation for 20 minutes then ask questions for 10 minutes with the instructor.

Poetry Open Mic
Monday, August 4, 7 – 8 p.m., Pod D
Share poetry, hear poetry. You do not have to be a poet to attend.

Bilingual Spanish Family Storytime/Hora de Cuentos Bilingüe Para Familias (ages 5+)
Tuesdays, August 5, 12, 19, & 26, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Orchard Room
Join us for stories, songs, and movement in Spanish and English.
¡Venga a la biblioteca para cuentos, canciones y movimiento en inglés y español!

Bilingual Mandarin Family Storytime/ 中英雙語故事時間
Tuesdays, August 5, 12, 19, & 26, 1 – 1:30 p.m., Orchard Room
These 30-minute sessions focus on early literacy by sharing stories and songs in both English and Mandarin Chinese. 歡迎小朋友來到故事時間，這是以半小時的雙中英語故事書, 兒歌, 手指謠, 玩遊戲為特色的內容。

The Whodunit? Mystery Book Club
Wednesday, August 6, 10:15 – 11:30 a.m., Teen Room
We will discuss Murder Between the Lines by Radha Vatsal.

Toddler Storytime
Wednesdays & Thursdays, August 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 & 28, 10:30 – 11 a.m.,
Orchard Room
This interactive storytime is for early walkers, 1s and 2s. Free tickets will be handed out 30 minutes before storytime.

Baby Storytime & Stay and Play
Wednesdays, August 6, 13, 20, & 27, 1 – 2 p.m.
Let's enjoy songs, rhymes, gentle movement, short books, and other fun. The storytime will last about 20 minutes, the rest of the time is Stay & Play with baby-appropriate toys.

ESL Conversation Club
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 1:30 – 3 p.m., Orchard Room
Practice your English conversation skills with friends. This program is for those who speak basic English. No registration required.

Preschool Storytime (ages 3-5)
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 3:30 – 4 p.m., Orchard Room
Join us for stories, music, movement, and more at our preschool storytime.

Teen Dungeons and Dragons Social Club
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., Conference Room
Teens are welcome to drop in and watch the game. Right now, the game is full, but we will occasionally have openings for new players. Please check in at the Adult Reference Desk.

Watercolor Workshop for Adults
Friday, August 8, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Orchard Room
Join us for a watercolor workshop. All supplies will be provided. Registration is not required. Seating will be determined on a first-come, first-serve basis, and no seat saving.

Board Game Sunday
Sunday, August 10, 2 – 3:30 p.m., Orchard Room
We have board games for adults, teens, and children – plus LEGOs and DUPLOs.

Honeybees and Beekeeping
Thursday, August 14, 6 – 7:30 p.m., Orchard Room
Learn about bee biology and behavior, beekeeping history and equipment, beehives and their products, beekeeping curiosities, and much, much more.

Bay Area Games Day
Saturday, August 16, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Orchard Room
Learn how to play a new board game or bring an old favorite. We welcome newcomers to gaming and families with kids.

Sunday CrafterNoon (all ages)
Sunday, August 17, 2 – 3:30 p.m., Orchard Room
This is a time to relax with the community and let your creativity shine. Children must come with their responsible adult crafting-buddy (this is not a drop-off program).

Open Space Odyssey
Tuesday, August 19, 6 – 8 p.m., Orchard Room
Join Midpen Open Space for an engaging evening where you'll explore the history, the flora and fauna and the ongoing preservation of our region's open spaces.

Furry Friends Reading Buddies (Grades K-8)
Saturday, August 23, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m., Orchard Room
Practice your reading skills by reading aloud to a friendly cat or dog. Please register.

Sunday Matinee Movies
Sunday, August 24, 2 – 4:15 p.m., Orchard Room
We will watch Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (Rated PG). Please enter through the lobby.

Now Read This Book Club
Monday, August 25, 12 – 1:30 p.m., Orchard Room
We will be discussing Plunder: Private Equity's Plan to Pillage America by Brendan Ballou.

Los Altos Book Discussion for Adults
Tuesday, August 26, 7 – 8 p.m., Orchard Room
Please email lpasternack@sccl.org to join the group.

Wednesday Travel Nights
Wednesday, August 27, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Orchard Room
From the oceanside, modern capital city of Rabat, to the Roman antiquities of Volubilis, to the camel herds of the Sahara Desert, to the snow-capped Atlas Mountains, Morocco is a nation of incredible differences that delight.

MILPITAS -- 160 N. Main Street

Qi Gong Meditation & Exercise Classes
Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, 1 – 3 p.m., Auditorium
Relieve stress and anxiety, increase energy and vitality and improve physical health during these exercise sessions.
Giảm căng thẳng và lo lắng, tăng năng lượng và sức sống, Cải thiện sức khỏe thể chất.

Knit & Crochet Circle
Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, 2 – 4 p.m., Conference Room
Meet other yarn lovers, get help or share ideas. Limited instruction available in Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati, but note this is not a class. No registration required. Materials not provided.

Mend with Friends
Saturday, August 2, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Conference Room
Bring your own items to mend. Limited mending supplies and casual instruction are available, but bringing your own favorite tools, extra buttons, fabric scraps, or experience to share is always appreciated.

Teen Rubik's Cube Club
Saturday, August 2, 4 – 5 p.m., Conference Room
Kids 12+ are invited to meet other cubers, learn new techniques and have fun.

ESL Conversation Club
Wednesdays, August 6, 13, 20, & 27, 2:45 – 3:45 p.m., Program Room
Practice your English conversation skills with friends. This program is for adults who speak basic English. No registration required.

Family Literacy Club: Decorate a Book Bag
Friday, August 8, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Auditorium
Prepare for the upcoming school year by decorating a book bag and learning about helpful resources that are available through the library! All supplies will be provided. No registration required but limited spots are available.

Board Game Day
Saturday, August 9, 10 a.m. – 6:30 p.m., Auditorium
Learn different board games or play your favorite one. This program is open to ages 18+. Online registration is encouraged but not required.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club
Monday, August 11, 7 – 8 p.m., Auditorium
Sign up and pick up a copy of Piranesi by Susanna Clarke to read before we meet.

10 Habits of Successful Gardeners
Saturday, August 16, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Program Room
Master Gardeners will share the secrets of seasoned gardeners who have mastered the delicate dance with nature. Bring your questions!

Adult and Teen Crafternoon
Saturday, August 16, 3 – 4:30 p.m., Program Room
Crafters ages 13+ will use stencils, paint and their imagination to decorate a book bag. All supplies are provided, no registration necessary.

Baby Bouncers Lapsit
Tuesdays, August 19 & 26, 11:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Activity Room
This is a baby and caregivers program with an early literacy focus on traditional nursery rhymes, lap bounces, body rhymes, songs, and very short and simple picture books. Bring a blanket for babies to lay on.

Preschool Storytime: 3s & 4s Budding Bookworms
Thursdays, August 21 & 28, 6:30 – 7 p.m., Activity Room
This storytime features longer picture books and flannel board stories and other storytelling activities and fingerplays.

Family Storytime
Saturdays, August 23 & 30, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Activity Room
This 30-minute storytime features movement, singing and action with picture books, flannel board stories and fingerplays.

Dungeons & Dragons Lite
Saturday, August 23, 2 – 4 p.m., Conference Room
Kids 13+ can try Dungeon World, a story-driven tabletop role-playing game with easy to remember rules.

Reading Buddies for Grades K-5
Saturday, August 23, 2 – 3 p.m., Activity Room
Children can buddy up with a furry friend and read one-on-one from a favorite book.

College Application Information Session
Saturday, August 23, 2 – 3:30 p.m., Program Room
This session is designed to help reduce anxiety by offering families a year-by-year roadmap outlining the key milestones and must-do steps each high school student should take—from freshman to senior year—to stay on track for college applications.

The Peaceful Poets
Thursday, August 28, 5:30 – 8 p.m., Conference Room
Spend time with a Milpitas-based group of writers and appreciators of poetry.

Claymation Film Workshop (ages 4-14)
Sundays, August 31 and September 7, 2 – 4 p.m.
Discover the art of filmmaking through this fun and interactive Claymation workshop. Led by industry experts, participants will gain hands-on experience in character development, storytelling, and stop-motion animation—all while exploring the creative process from a filmmaker's perspective. Register online.

MORGAN HILL -- 660 W. Main Avenue

Recruiting for the Morgan Hill Library Teen Advisory Board
Friday, August 1 – Saturday, August 30
High school students who are interested in advocating for teens, creating and planning events, and working on a team with like-minded teens, consider sending in an application.

Tiny Tot Jamboree
Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Children's Activity Room
Toddlers (1-2 years old) and caregivers are invited to join us for short stories, rhymes, fingerplays and songs.

Itty Bitty Jamboree
Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, 12 – 12:30 p.m., Children's Activity Room
Babies (12 months and younger) and their caregivers are invited to join us for stories, music, movement and more!

Lunch at the Library
Mondays-Fridays through August 8, 12 – 1 p.m. (except during holidays)
Children ages 0-18 can stop by for lunch, while supplies last. No registration required.
¡Almuerzos Gratuitos para niños de 0 a 18 años! No es necesario registrarse.

Bilingual Family Storytime for All Ages
Saturdays, August 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 10:30 – 11:15 a.m., Children's Activity Room
Join us for fun with your little one! Stories, music, movement, and more! Storytimes are bilingual (Spanish/English).
¡Acompáñenos para divertirse en familia con su pequeño! ¡Cuentos, música, movimiento y más! Las horas de cuentos son bilingües (español/inglés).

Un-Bee-Livably Delicious: Cooking Dinner with Honey
Saturday, August 2, 2 – 3 p.m.
This program will guide you through creating a complete and delicious dinner, highlighting the unique flavors honey can bring to every course. Discover exciting techniques and flavor pairings that will elevate your weeknight meals and impress your guests.

Free Bike Repair & Helmet Fitting Workshop
Sunday, August 3, 1 – 4 p.m., Parking Lot
Bike Repair Mobile is a free bicycle repair clinic offered on a drop-in basis. They address a wide range of common bicycle malfunctions, including flat tires, brake issues, and shifter problems. Children's bikes get priority service. Children can also get a free helmet, while supplies last.

Zumba
Mondays, August 4 & 18, 6 – 7 p.m., Program Room
Join us for a free dance and rhythm-based workout. This Latin-inspired, easy-to-follow, fitness party exhilarates your senses and works all major muscle groups in a high-energy cardio blast.

Evening Itty Bitty Jamboree
Tuesdays, August 5 & 19, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Parents and babies can join us for short fun stories, rhymes, fingerplays and songs. Our Itty Bitty Jamboree is 30 minutes followed by Stay & Play time.

After Dinner Book Club
Wednesday, August 6, 7 – 8 p.m., Program Room
We will discuss Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books by Kirsten Miller.

Toddler Storytime
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Children's Activity Room
Join us for a fun-filled storytime featuring stories, songs, rhymes, and lots of interactive movement aimed at 2–3-year-olds and their caregivers.

Preschool Storytime
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 11:15 – 11:45 a.m., Children's Activity Room
Join us for a fun-filled storytime featuring stories, songs, rhymes, and lots of interactive movement aimed at 3–4-year-olds and their caregivers.

Fiber Arts Club
Thursday, August 7, 4 – 5:45 p.m., Program Room
This is a welcoming community for anyone interested in crafts such as knitting, crocheting, weaving and more. Learn new skills, share your projects and connect with fellow crafters. This program is for adults 18+.

Baking Soda-Vinegar Volcano
Friday, August 8, 3 – 4 p.m., Children's Activity Room
Join us for an exciting hands-on experiment where kids will create their very own baking soda and vinegar volcanoes. Learn about chemical reactions, have fun designing your volcano, and watch it erupt with foamy lava!

Safe Space for LGBTQ+ Teens and Young Adults (ages 13-25)
Fridays, August 8 & 22, 4 – 5:30 p.m., Community Room
Our staff-led meetings offer a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and ally (LGBTQ+) youth to play games, participate in group activities and discussions, and build community. No registration necessary.

ESL Conversation Club
Saturdays, July 12 & 19, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Program Room
Practice your English conversation skills with friends. This is for adults 18+ who speak basic English. No registration required.

Novel-Teas
Sunday, August 10 – August 31, Information Room
Pick up a tea kit featuring two Chamomile tea bags, book pairings, and a recipe to try.

Adaptive Activities for Teens and Adults
Monday, August 11, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
Adults and teens with disabilities—and their caregivers—are invited to enjoy accessible games, friendly conversation, and opportunities to make new friends.

Power Up Game Night for Adults
Tuesday, August 12, 6 – 8:45 p.m., Program Room
Dive into a high-energy video game experience that blends the thrill of party-style board games with fast-paced, arcade-style racing! Compete in mini-games, roll the dice, and hit the track with wild power-ups and hilarious twists.

Kids LEGO Club
Wednesdays, August 13 & 27, 1 –3 p.m., Children's Activity Room
Children will use their creativity and engineering skills to build anything they can imagine. LEGOs are available for ages 2+. No registration required.

Dungeons and Dragons for Teens: Session 0
Saturday, August 16, 2:30 – 5:30 p.m., Program Room
If you have ever wanted to learn to play Dungeons and Dragons or are looking for a group of teens to play with, then you have found your club! If you want to join our D&D club for teens, you are committing to playing with us twice a month for the entire Fall 2025 semester. Session 0 is mandatory, as we will discuss the campaign, basic rules and expectations. Please register.

Library Ukulele Society
Tuesday, August 19, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., Program Room
Bring your uke and music stand or come to listen and sing along! No registration required.

Claymation Film Workshop (ages 4-14)
Wednesdays, August 20 & 27, 2 – 4 p.m.
Discover the art of filmmaking through this fun and interactive Claymation workshop. Led by industry experts, participants will gain hands-on experience in character development, storytelling, and stop-motion animation—all while exploring the creative process from a filmmaker's perspective. Register online.

Sensory Playtime (ages 4-10 with a parent/caregiver)
Friday, August 22, 4 – 5 p.m., Children's Activity Room
Sensory playtime is a hands-on, interactive experience designed to engage children through a variety of activities. Designed for kids with sensory processing differences, autism, or who have other special needs. Please register.

Honor Books & Live Music
Saturday, August 23, 2 – 3:30 p.m.
Stop by our Honor Book program—choose from a special selection of free books to take home, no returns needed! While you browse, enjoy the upbeat sounds of The Soft Lights, a South Bay cover band known for their feel-good music.

Composting Basics
Tuesday, August 26, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., Program Room
Join our Composting Workshop to learn the basics of composting at home—from what to compost to how to maintain a healthy, odor-free pile. Please bring your own 5-gallon bucket or bin. This program is for adults.

UCCE Master Gardeners
Wednesday, August 27, 6 – 7 p.m., Program Room
This will be an informative session on native shrubs and small trees that support local ecosystems. Learn about drought-tolerant species, ideal planting choices for fall, and the cultural practices that help these plants thrive.

SARATOGA -- 13650 Saratoga Avenue

Shimmering in Sunlight Art Exhibit
Saratoga Library Lobby
Enjoy this art exhibit by Belinda F.C. Lo.

Baby Storytime (12 months or younger)
Fridays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Community Room
Join us for fun, interactive nursery rhymes, fingerplays, action rhymes, and songs!

Family Storytime
Saturdays, August 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Community Room
Tuesdays, August 5, 12, 19, & 26, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Maple Room
Join us for stories, rhymes, and songs.

Arabic Belly Dance
Sunday, August 3, 2 – 3 p.m.
Immerse yourself in the captivating world of Arabic dance with a vibrant and interactive performance, followed by a dance lesson open to everyone.

Mystery Book Club
Monday, August 4, 7 – 8 p.m., Orchard Room
We will discuss The Busybody Book Club by Freya Sampson. Drop by the Adult Reference Desk to sign up and pick up a copy of the book.

Knit & Crochet Circle
Wednesday, August 6, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., Maple Room
Bring your own projects and yarn, ask questions, receive help, give help, share ideas and meet new people.

Drop-in Tech Help
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Oak Room
Get help using your laptop, tablet or cell phone. Help is first-come, first-served.

Free Bike Repair
Saturday, August 9, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Bike Repair Mobile is a free bicycle repair clinic offered on a drop-in basis. They address a wide range of common bicycle malfunctions, including flat tires, brake issues, and shifter problems. Children's bikes get priority service.

Beginner Guitar and Ukulele Class for Adults
Tuesdays, August 6 – September 16, 10:15 – 11 a.m., Community Room
Join us weekly for fun, easy to follow, beginner lessons. Featuring popular music, learn how to build chords and build up finger strength all while meeting a community of music enthusiasts on the same journey. Please register only if you can come to all 6 classes.

Band Jam: Guitar and Ukulele
Tuesdays, August 12, 19, & 26, 11:15 a.m. – 12 p.m., Community Room
Join us every week, singing and strumming along with popular songs in a fun, easy-going environment.

Plan Your Cool Season Vegetable Garden
Tuesday, August 12, 7 – 8:30 p.m., Community Room
We'll talk about cool season vegetables like Asian greens, lettuce, kale, cauliflower, broccoli, peas and more. We'll also cover how to plant your vegetables, discuss common problems and how to deal with pests.

Chinese Book Club/ 中文書友會
Thursday, August 14, 10:15 – 11:45 a.m., Orchard Room
The August book selection is: 當下的力量 : 通往靈性開悟的指引 by Eckhart Tolle. The discussion is primarily in Mandarin. 參與者可選讀中文或英文版，討論則將以中文為主.

Watercolor Class for Adults
Thursday, August 14, 1 – 2:30 p.m., Community Room
This hands-on workshop invites adults to explore the beauty and simplicity of watercolor painting in a welcoming, supportive setting. Please register.

Chinese Medicine for Emotions and Internal Organ Health
Sunday, August 17, 2 – 3 p.m., Community Room
We'll discuss how long-term emotions can affect the physical body.

Board Game Night for Adults
Monday, August 18, 6 – 8 p.m., Maple Room
Drop in at any time and play from one of the variety of board games.

LEGOs
Wednesday, August 20, 4 – 5 p.m., Orchard Room
Kids 5+ can stop by to build LEGOs. For kiddos under 5, we have Duplos.

Mandarin Storytime
Thursday, August 21, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Orchard Room
Join us for stories, fingerplays, action rhymes and songs in Mandarin.

Teatime Book Chatter
Thursday, August 21, 1 – 2 p.m., Orchard Room
We will be discussing No More Tears by Gardiner Harris. Stop by the Adult Reference Desk to register and pick up a copy of the book.

Spanish Storytime
Thursday, August 28, 11 – 11:30 a.m., Orchard Room
Join us for fun stories, fingerplays, action rhymes and songs in Spanish.

WOODLAND – 1975 Grant Road

Monday Meditation and Mindfulness
Mondays, August 4, 11, 18, & 25, 7 – 7:30 p.m.
Practice meditation for 20 minutes, then ask questions for 10 minutes with the instructor.

Book Discussion for Adults
Tuesday, August 12, 2 – 3:15 p.m.
Email lpasternack@sccl.org to join the monthly email reminders.

ONLINE EVENTS (Please register online)

Virtual Author Talk: Jay Falk
Tuesday, August 5, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Delve into the fascinating world of birds through astonishing photography and clear explanations in the captivating global guide, The Bird Book: The Stories, Science, and History of Birds.

Online English Conversation Club
Thursdays, August 7, 14, 21, & 28, 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Meet new friends and practice English together.

Financial Planning: Choosing the Right Senior Care Option
Tuesday, August 19, 7 – 8 p.m.
In this online talk, different types of senior care options will be explored. Hear the pros and cons of each so that you can make an informed decision for your loved one.

Virtual Author Talk: Casey McQuiston
Wednesday, August 20, 4 – 5 p.m.
Get ready for Casey McQuiston's The Pairing, a fiery, fast-paced romantic comedy that reunites two bisexual exes—Theo and Kit—on a European food and wine tour neither of them realized the other had booked.

Virtual Author Talk: Dr. Tasha Eurich
Thursday, August 28, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Learn how to master the daily grind and become shatterproof in a tumultuous world with key insights from Dr. Tasha Eurich as she discusses her newest book, Shatterproof: How to Thrive in a World of Constant Chaos (and why resilience alone isn't enough).

Los Altos and Woodland Libraries

August 2025

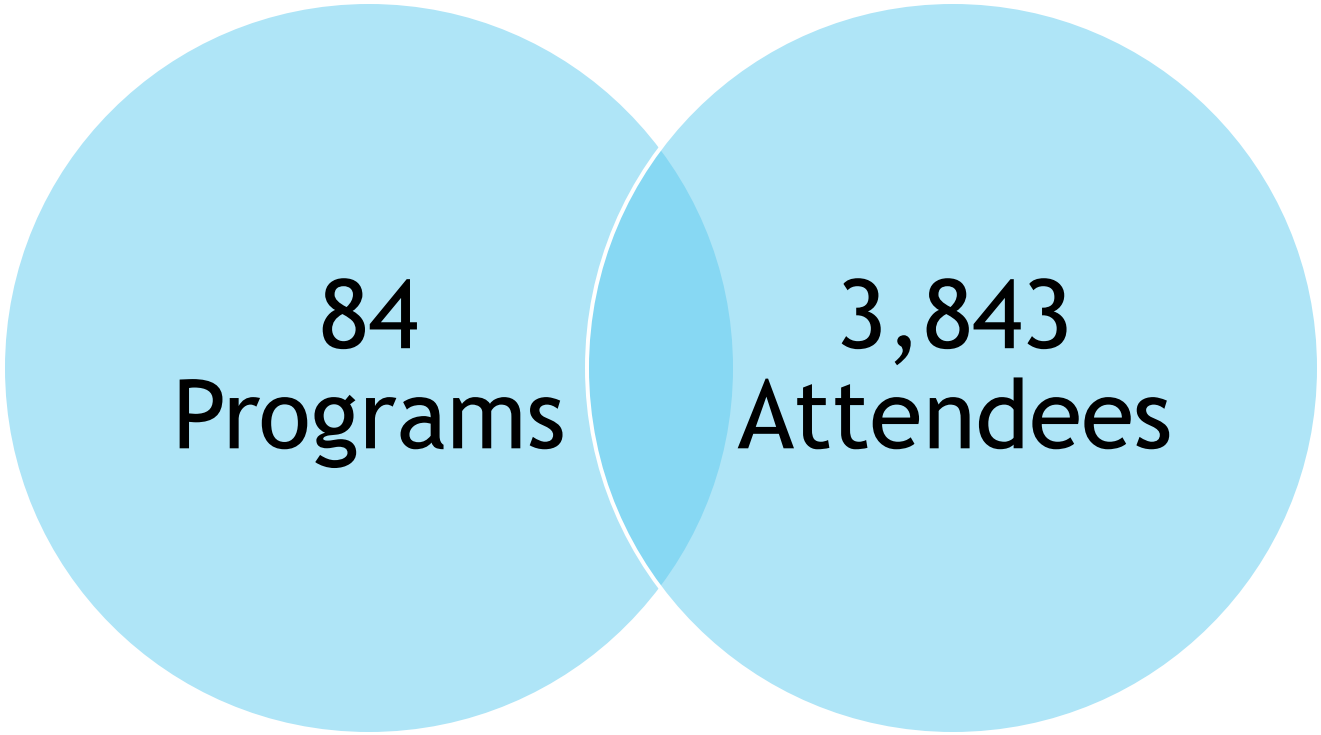
Welcome Kevin!

After receiving his BA from Rutgers University, Kevin spent over 20 years in the book business (at a small publisher; at the ebook publishing and distribution platform, Smashwords; and in used and new book retail). He'll be finishing his Master of Library and Information Science program at SJSU at the end of this year. . He has also been a volunteer with Midpeninsula Open Space as an Advance Resource Management Steward for close to ten years.

Woodland Open Access Expanded Hours

- Sunday – Thursday 8 am -11 am
- Starting September 21, 2025

June 2025



June 2025

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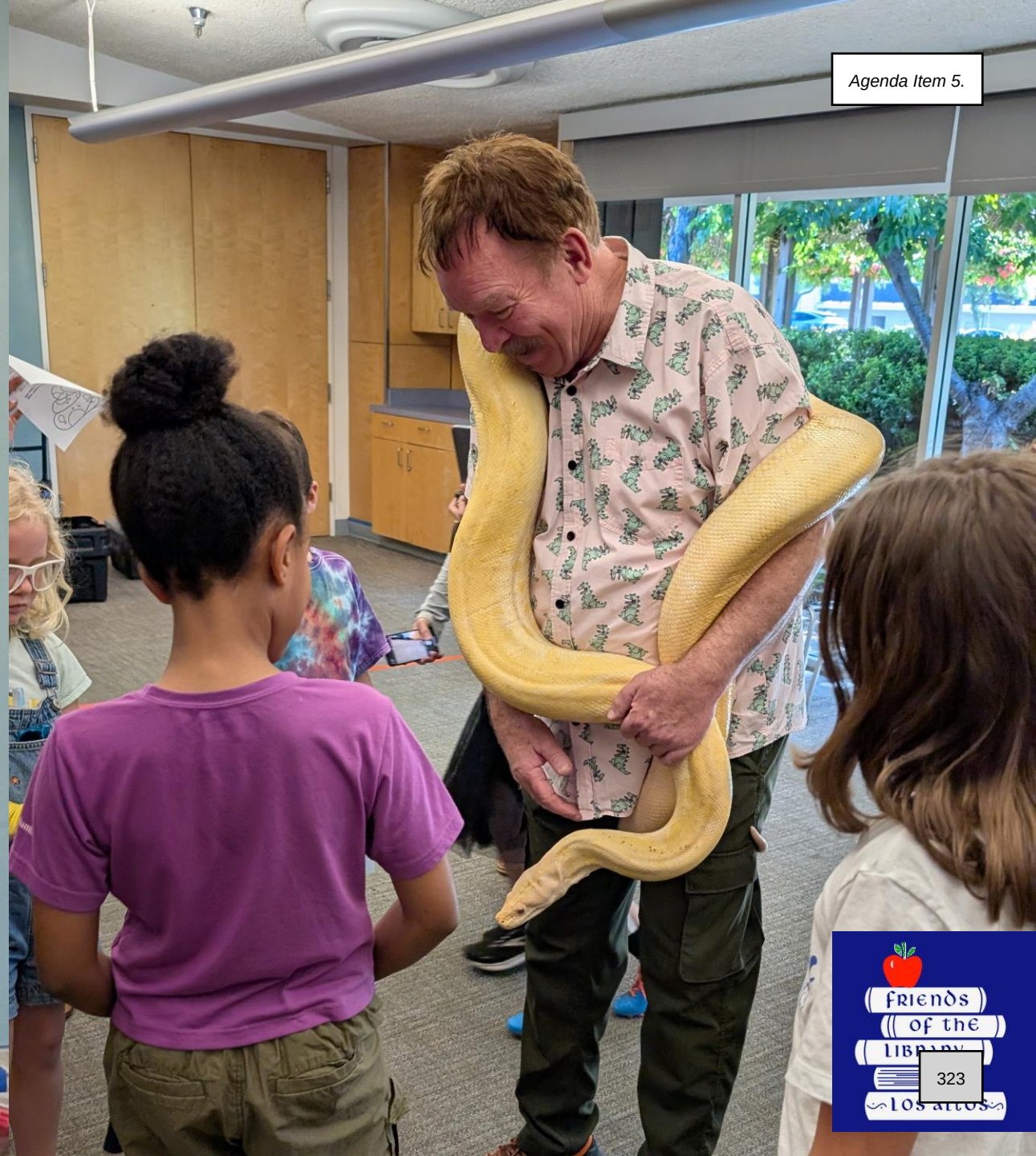

SUNDAY CRAFTERNOON
All-ages crafting on the third Sunday of the month.
sponsored by the Friends of the Los Altos Library
SUNDAY, AUGUST 17
FROM 2:00 TO 3:30 PM
(DROP-IN)
Adults, teens, and kids - join us on the third Sunday of every month for an afternoon of relaxed crafting!
Supplies are provided for you to explore a new surprise art style or activity every month.
This craft is self-directed; children must come with their responsible adult crafting-buddy.
This is not a drop-off event.
For accessibility accommodations (ex. ASL), please fill out the online form at ask@lib.sccgov.org/accessibility 7+days prior to the event.
If you need assistance with the form, speak with a staff member at your local library, call (408) 540-3945, or email us at ask@lib.sccgov.org.

Cult Classics
Sunday Matinee Movies

Join us for the Cult Classic Movie

Spider-Man

Into the Spider-Verse

Sunday, August 24th

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM (movie begins at 2:15 PM)

All ages are welcome.
Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Enter the Orchard Room through the Lobby doors.
Doors to and from the Children's room will not be open.

For accessibility accommodations (ex. ASL), please fill out the online form at ask@lib.sccgov.org/accessibility 7+days prior to the event. If you need assistance with the form, speak with a staff member at your local library, call (408) 540-3945, or email us at ask@lib.sccgov.org.

Join us for
BOARD GAME SUNDAYS!

Everyone's invited to play board games at the library on the 2nd Sunday afternoon of the month.

We have board games for children, teens, and adults + LEGOs and DUPLOS.

Sunday, August 10th, from 2:00 to 3:30 PM.
Come with friends & family!

For accessibility accommodations (ex. ASL), please fill out the online form at ask@lib.sccgov.org/accessibility 7+days prior to the event.
If you need assistance with the form, speak with a staff member at your local library, call (408) 540-3945, or email us at ask@lib.sccgov.org.

Los Altos Library Orchard Outing: Just outside of the Los Altos Library, you'll discover the historic apricot orchards. Through Storybook SCCLD, families will be able to enjoy an Orchard Outing INSIDE the children's room! Take an imaginary drive in the farm truck. Babies can explore the Apri-Tot area and the SpriteBots are full of fun and games to introduce little ones to letters, numbers, rhyming words, and much more!

ADULT & TEEN PROGRAMS

- August 8 at 11:00 am Watercolor Workshop for Adults
- August 11 at 10:30 am – Monday Morning Meditation
- August 13 at 6:30 pm – Embroidery Workshop
- August 19 at 6:00 pm –Open Space Odyssey with Midpen
- August 21 at 1:30 pm – ESL Conversation Club
- August 24 at 2:00 pm – Cult Classics Matinee Movies

https://sccld.org/events

Children's Programs

- Board Game Sunday (8/10 at 2:00 pm)
- Bilingual Spanish Storytime (8/11 at 10:30 am)
- Bilingual Mandarin Storytime (8/12 at 1:00 pm)
- Sunday Crafternoon (8/17 at 2:00 pm)
- Furry Friends (8/23 at 2:30 pm)
- Preschool Storytime (8/28 at 3:30 pm)

Summer Reading Prizes

- Adults: Friends Book Sale gift certificate and entry into a grand prize drawing
- Teen: $10 Amazon gift card
- Children: Book and a Friends Book Sale gift certificate