



UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

Northern California Chapter
Society of Architectural Historians

The Newsletter

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The Palaces of the San Francisco Peninsula Redux

Many members were disappointed when the fall 2016 tour of Peninsula mansions booked up so quickly they could not take advantage of that opportunity. The NCCSAH board has decided to offer those members first crack at a fall tour that will include two of the houses on the earlier program plus a third house not previously open to us.

On Wednesday, September 27, participants will gather at Newmar, in Hillsborough, at 10:00 am. Lewis Hobart designed the house and landscaping at the estate for San Francisco businessman George A. Newhall. A Spreckels heir acquired the property in 1940 and changed the name to La Dolphine, by which it is known today. This estate was *not* on last fall's program.



Green Gables, by Greene and Greene. Photo: Ward Hill

Lunch will follow at Villa Delizia, much enjoyed by the group who were on the 2016 tour. The day will close with a visit to the Carolands Chateau, the grandest of the Peninsula houses, created for the heiress to the Pullman Railcar fortune.

Two days prior to this program, Monday, September 25, the general membership, including those signing up for the tour of September 27, will have the chance to view two other Peninsula properties. We will greet the morning in Woodside at the Fleishhacker summer estate, Green Gables, designed by Greene and Greene. Here our group will have a unique opportunity; the estate manager, Hilary Grenier, will lead the tour.

We then head to Filoli, the country estate of William Bourn, today owned by the National Trust. Lunch will be served at the visitor center, at which time we will view a new documentary film about the estate's history. Copies of the recently published book, *Filoli: Family Home, Historic Garden, Living Museum*, will be available at a

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Palaces of the San Francisco Peninsula Part II



*Green Gables, view south toward Santa Cruz Mountains.
Below, card room. Photos: Ward Hill*

With this issue of the newsletter, we complete our review of great family estates of the San Francisco Peninsula, begun last fall.

Green Gables

The Fleishhacker family's 75-acre Green Gables estate in Woodside is considered the largest, most ambitious project by the venerable Pasadena architects Greene and Greene (brothers Charles and Henry). Its garden, described by landscape historian David Sreatfield as, "one of the most extraordinary geometric garden designs ever created in the United States", is also considered to be the largest in the world designed by major figures in the Arts and Crafts movement.

Mortimer Fleishhacker, a prominent San Francisco businessman and, with his wife Bella, a patron of the arts, built Green Gables as a summer home. When considering hiring the Greenes as their architects, the Fleishhackers toured Pasadena to look at houses the brothers had worked on. They disliked the now-iconic,

Japanese-influenced "Ultimate Bungalows", like the Gamble House or Blacker House, and told the architects they wanted an English country house with a thatched roof and no natural wood interior.

The Fleishhackers particularly loved the views from the Woodside property to the surrounding mountains, and Charles Greene reportedly spent many days in a meditative trance at the site, planning how the house and the adjacent gardens would relate to the surrounding natural landscape. Although the gardens present a unified composition, Greene worked on them in phases from 1910 to 1933.

Part of the genius of Greene's design is how the natural landscape frames and complements the abstract geometry of the designed landscape. A formal garden on the south side of the house leads to a pond that reflects back an image of the house and its garden. South of the pond, the long unifying axis directs one's eye through the center of a double staircase, a Roman pool and a symmetrical stone arcade to an unobstructed view of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The Fleishhacker family continues to own Green Gables and occupies the house as a summer residence. The original Greene & Greene house and gardens have not been altered. During the 1990s, the family donated a conservation easement to the Garden Conservancy, ensuring preservation of the entire 75-acre estate in perpetuity.

Filoli

William Bowers Bourn and his wife Agnes Moody Bourn turned to Willis Polk to design the main house for their country estate, Filoli, in Woodside. Bourn coined the name "Filoli" by combining the first two letters of the three key words in his favorite credo: "**F**ight for a just cause; **L**ove your fellow man; **L**ive a good life."

Bourn amassed his wealth as the owner of the Empire Mine in Grass Valley, one of the richest gold mines in California. He was also the owner and president of the



Spring Valley Water Company, which supplied water to San Francisco and the Peninsula. Crystal Springs Lake, just north of Filoli, was the company's main watershed.

The San Francisco magnate was Polk's most important and reliable patron. Prior to this commission, the architect had designed a multitude of properties for him, including a mansion on Webster Street in San Francisco's Pacific Heights (1896) and the grand Water Temple at Sunol (1910) for the water company.

In 1914, planning for a country estate, Bourn purchased a 704-acre property surrounded by Spring Valley Water Company land at the southern end of Crystal Springs Lake. He particularly admired the site's grand vista north toward the lake. Cambridge educated and a dedicated Anglophile, Bourn found the beauty and privacy of the property's remote upland valley reminiscent of the English countryside.

The design of the house and gardens also reflects Bourn's love of English architecture and gardens. Stylistically, the mansion is primarily English neo-Georgian, with its red-brick walls and symmetrical neo-Palladian composition (a central block with side wings). Polk mixed in Mediterranean touches, like the prominent red tile roof and gravel-covered entry courtyard.

The fact that the San Andreas fault, whose movement caused the devastation of 1906, bisects the property, greatly influenced the construction of the mansion. It was built with 4½-foot-



*Entrance to Filoli. Photo courtesy of Filoli Center.
Below, Filoli sunken gardens. Photo: Jane Shabaker*

thick brick masonry walls and an extensive steel frame structure for the roof.

Bourn continually emphasized to Polk that he wanted to keep the design simple. The plain brick walls with simple quoins and the spare detailing of the roof cornice could be considered too flat, restrained, and severe; but, overall, the house has a gravitas and dignity that undoubtedly reflect the personality of its original owner.

Bourn eventually fired Polk because of his notorious drinking problem and constant cost overruns. He hired Bakewell & Brown to complete the project. The San Francisco firm subsequently designed the garden cottage, the carriage house, and the garden's greenhouses and hardscape.

Created after the house was completed, in 1917, the Filoli gardens are a masterpiece of early 20th century landscape design in the western United States. The formal 17th century English garden is the principal influence, consistent with the Georgian style of the house. Additional eclectic influences include French formal gardens and a certain medieval character associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement.



Although the gardens are usually attributed to Bourn's friend, the artist Bruce Porter, recent research has shown that a "garden team" of Bourn, Porter, Arthur Brown Jr. and horticulturist Isabella Worn collaborated on the design. Porter's experience as an artist, painter, and stained glass designer informed his "painterly" approach to the Filoli gardens. The strong

architectural element of the gardens can most likely be attributed to Brown, with Bourn himself providing additional input.

Landscape historian David Streatfield noted how Worn's aptitude as a colorist resulted in the subtle interplay between the garden and the surrounding landscape: the Irish yews that pick up the dark green of the native oaks and laurels, the poplars that provide washes of lighter green, and the Italian stone pines that echo the darker colors of the tree-covered hills to the west. The plantings in the garden also had a changing color palette during different seasons.

Both William and Agnes Bourn died in 1936. The following year, William and Lillian Roth purchased Filoli from the Bourn estate for \$225,000. Roth helped build Matson Navigation Company into one of the nation's major steamship lines. The Roths made few substantial alterations to either the mansion or the gardens. Lillian loved gardening and had many varieties of camellias planted on the property. After William died in 1963, Lillian continued to live at Filoli until she donated the estate to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1975.



View of garden at Filoli. Photo:
Jane Shabaker

The Filoli Center, a non-profit corporation, was established in February 1976 to manage the property. It is now the only major Peninsula estate open to the public on a regular schedule, from February through October. The gardens in particular are a



Photo: *La Dolphine*, *Architectural Record*, 1915

major destination in the springtime when 50,000 tulips come into bloom. In recent years, Filoli has served as a popular filming location for television programs like *Dynasty* and *Nash Bridges*, and for movies like *Heaven Can Wait* and *The Wedding Planner*.

The thousands of acres of undeveloped hills and public land around Filoli are protected, and have remained untouched since Bourn purchased the property. The result is a magnificent setting that is truly unique among the great estates of the Peninsula.

La Dolphine

In 1908, architect Lewis Hobart designed both the French Neo-Classical house and the landscape at Newmar, widely admired by other architects in its day. The New York-based magazine, *Architectural Record*, published the site plan of extensive formal gardens and a rendering of the project, in 1909. At the time the house was built, its formal garden was the most extensive for a Peninsula estate.

Hobart's client was George A. Newhall, a prominent San Francisco businessman who was active in civic affairs. Born in 1862, George Newhall was the youngest son of Henry Mayo Newhall, who had founded a successful auction house and import/export business in San Francisco and increased his fortune through real estate and railroad investments. As its president and a financial investor, Henry Newhall oversaw completion of the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad, whose successor, Caltrain, continues to serve the Peninsula. George and his brother Edward took over the family business after their father's death in 1882.

In the 1890s, George Newhall purchased one of the five speculative "cottages" that A. Page Brown de-

signed in the style of a Tudor manor house. It was one of the first residential developments in what later became Hillsborough. In engaging Hobart years later, he clearly was seeking a more aristocratic image of power and prestige.

Construction on the house and garden was completed in 1913. The result was a model of restraint and dignity. A graduate of the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, Hobart used a variety of then-popular French architectural sources for the Newmar design, including André Le Nôtre's landscape design for Château de Vaux le Vicomte and Le Petit Trianon at Versailles. Large Hillsborough estates were a significant focus of Hobart's early practice, which included neoclassical designs for the estates Strawberry Hill and Rosecourt.

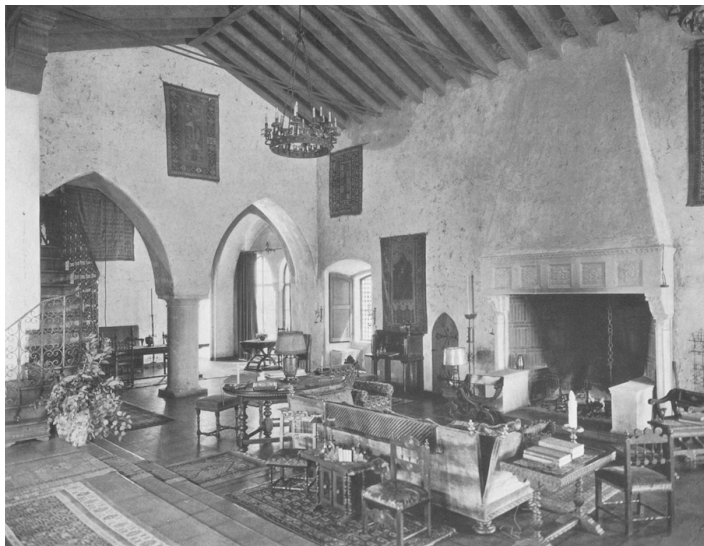
After George Newhall died in 1929, the estate passed to his widow Caroline, who left the place vacant for 10 years before selling it to homebuilder Louis Lengfield, in 1940. Lengfield subdivided the original 20 acres, leaving the residence and formal garden intact on approximately 4.5 acres. Construction of a subdivision of single-family residences on the balance of the 20 acres has blocked the extended vistas to the south from the house's rear terrace.

Mrs. Dorothy Spreckels Dupuy, heir to the Spreckels Sugar Company fortune, purchased the residence and gardens in 1940 and named the reconfigured estate *La Dolphine*, after the dolphin-shaped faucets in one of the bathrooms. She entertained lavishly at *La Dolphine*, especially outdoors. She added a tennis court and had the ornamental reflecting pool converted into a swimming pool. Mrs. Dupuy sold *La Dolphine* in 1952, and during the next 22 years the property passed through a half-dozen short-term owners. Various development proposals threatened the gardens and the house with demolition. The current owner's parents purchased the house and 3.5 acres of adjacent formal gardens in 1973. In 2007, *La Dolphine* entered the National Register of Historic Places.



Villa Delizia & The Carolands

More detailed background on Villa Delizia and The Carolands, which are included on the September 27, 2017 program with La Dolphine, appeared in the Fall 2016 issue of the newsletter, which you may now access at www.nccsah.org



Villa Delizia. Photo: Architecture, February 1928

The Delight and Garfield D. Merner house - *Villa Delizia* - is one of most unusual Spanish Colonial Revival style houses on the San Francisco Peninsula. It has a unique plan and massing, and its stunning interior combines spatial drama, whimsy, and romantic fantasy. The architect was James Mitchell, the chief designer of the firm Willis Polk & Company. He began design work on the house in 1926, although Polk himself may have done some work on the project before he died in 1924 (his firm continued to operate for ten years after his death).

The *Villa Delizia* design was widely lauded in its day. The house received an award from the Northern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and was featured in three architectural publications, including the national periodical *Architecture* in February 1928. The June 1927 issue of *The Architect and Engineer* described the architecture as Italian farmhouse style, although it clearly incorporates elements of both Spanish and Italian rural villas.

Completed in 1916, the Carolands Chateau is a 46,050-square-foot, 98-room mansion on 5.83 acres in Hillsborough. The mansion originally sat on a 554-acre estate and was the largest residence in the Western United States. An example of French Neo-

Classical design, the mansion is a California Historical Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The mansion was built for Harriett Pullman Carolan, the daughter of George Pullman, the 19th-century American industrialist who created the Pullman Palace Car Company, famous for its railway sleeping cars. The Chateau exterior was inspired by the 17th century designs of the French architect, François Mansart. The Chateau was executed by the San Francisco architect Willis Polk following plans commissioned by Mrs. Carolan from the Parisian architect Ernest Sanson, who was at the time one of the foremost designers of prestigious private homes in France. In 2006, a feature-length documentary, *Three Women and a Chateau*, which tells the 100-year history of Carolands, appeared at eight film festivals, winning Best Documentary (Grand Jury Award) at the Rhode Island International Film Festival. The film was produced at the partnership of Catherine Ryan and Gary Weimberg. A beautiful book about the mansion, *Carolands: Ernest Sanson, Achille Duchêne, Willis Polk*, by Michael Middleton Dwyer, photography by Mick Hales, was published in 2006.



Ward Hill

Registration for Palaces of the San Francisco Peninsula Redux

[please print]

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email address _____

Registration:

- ☐ September 25 - members \$45
nonmembers \$65
- ☐ September 27 - members \$45
nonmembers \$65
- ☐ Both tours - members \$90
nonmembers \$110

Costs include lunch and admission fees
Nonmember price includes one year's
membership in NCCSAH

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to NCCSAH and mail to:
Ward Hill
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3124 Octavia Street, #102
San Francisco, CA 94123

For more information please contact
Ward Hill at whill@pacbell.net.

Space is limited; reserve your place now!

Tour of Spanish Revival Homes in San Jose



Sunday, August 26, 2017, Preservation Action Council of San Jose presents an open homes architectural tour in historic neighborhoods including Willow Glen and Hanchett Park. The tour samples eight 1920s Spanish Revival houses by the San Jose firm of Wolfe & Higgins. Frank Wolfe was already well known for his innovative Prairie-style residential designs when he partnered with his son Carl Wolfe and William Ernest Higgins to form what would become one of the most prolific architectural firms of its time. Early adopters of the Spanish Revival style, the firm of Wolfe & Higgins lasted just fourteen years but in that short time produced more than 500 homes, commercial buildings, and institutional buildings. Among these are some of the most recognizable architectural landmarks in Northern California and some of the most beautiful houses in San Jose.

For details:

<http://www.wolfeandhigginstour.com/about.html>

NCCSAH Spring Program Explored Frank Lloyd Wright's Bay Area Legacy

The Frank Lloyd Wright on the Peninsula tour began at the 1937 Hanna “Honeycomb” House on the Stanford University campus. NCCSAH board member Paul Turner, emeritus professor of art at the university, and author of the recently published, and much praised book, *Frank Lloyd Wright and San Francisco*, was our principal guide for the day.

Wright designed the house at the invitation of a young Stanford professor and his wife, who engaged actively with the architect in realizing the project. The house was, Wright said, “a new venture into space-concepts,” abandoning the rectangular box for the hexagon—hence the nickname “Honeycomb”.

Ten years after suffering extensive damage from the Loma Prieta earthquake, the Hanna House was fully and beautifully restored. Today Stanford uses the house for special events and offers public tours.

Following an excellent buffet luncheon by the Stanford food services, our group headed to Atherton to view the Wright-inspired home that Anshen and Allen designed for developer Joseph Eichler, in 1950, as his personal residence. The source of that inspiration was the final stop on the day's program: the Bazett House in Hillsborough.

A visit with the Hannas in their new home led Sidney and Louise Bazett to ask Wright to design a house for them. Completed in 1940, the house employed hexagon forms, as well. While the Bazetts loved the house—Louise wrote to Wright that they “truly have more of a home than we had ever hoped for”—personal difficulties caused them to move out of the house in 1943. They sold it two years later to Louis and Betty Frank. Now properly the Bazett-Frank House, it remains in the Frank family, owned today by one of their sons.



Hanna House, photo by Jane Shabaker

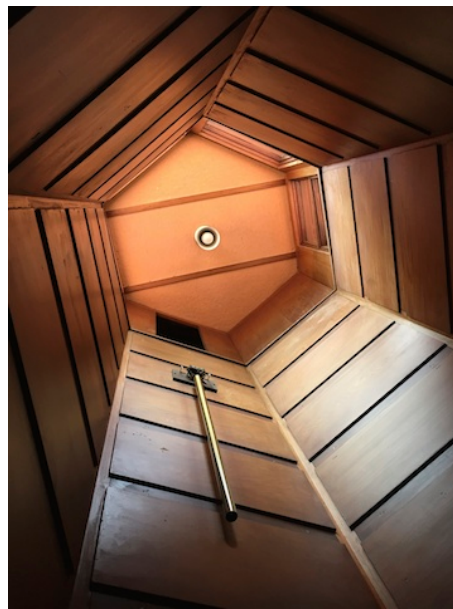
During the two years before the Franks bought the house, Joseph Eichler lived there as a tenant. Of those years, the Bay Area builder later wrote, “Each day offered new living experiences that were a revelation to me. . . . I admired Wright's rich design, with its wooden walls and beamed ceiling, and I asked myself if such houses could be built for ordinary people.”

The answer was, “yes”. Eichler's career as a builder, between 1949 and 1970, produced more than 10,000 homes in Bay Area suburbs, thus extending Frank Lloyd Wright's legacy beyond the relatively few designs by Wright actually built here. It was instructive to observe the chain from the Hannas, whose home inspired the Bazetts, whose home, in turn, inspired Eichler.

We are grateful to NCCSAH member Dave Weinstein, who arranged for our visit with the owners of the Eichler house, Ginny Anderson and Paul Feder. We thank them for generously welcoming us into their home.

Thanks are also due to the following: Laura Jones, director of heritage services and university archaeologist at Stanford, for arranging access to the Hanna House. Laurence Frank owner of the Bazett house. His brother Oliver Frank kindly opened the house to us, in Laurence's absence, and spoke of the experience of growing up there.

Photo Gallery: Wright in the Bay Area



Photos clockwise from top left: Paul Turner offers commentary (Photo: Jane Shabaker); a moment's rest in the living room of Eichler's own house (photo: Ward Hill); hexagonal cushions in Hanna House living room and view (next photo) into honeycomb shaped skylight (photos: Jane Shabaker) reflect Wright's design scheme for the entire house; the Hanna House kitchen, or "laboratory", as Wright preferred to call it (photo: Ward Hill); Dave Weinstein speaks during visit to the Bazett House, the inspiration for Eichler's career as a builder of suburban Bay Area subdivisions (photo: Paul Turner).

Continued from page 1

20% discount (cash or charge card). After lunch Jim Salyards, director of horticulture, will lead us through the famous gardens, and Julie DeVere, director of collections, will take us through the house. This is a very special opportunity.

Cost for one day's program, per person, including lunch, is \$45 for NCCSAH members, \$65 for non-members. The nonmembers charge includes a one-year NCCSAH membership. Members who sign up for both tours will pay \$90; the nonmembers charge for the two-tour package is \$110.

As of press time, space is available on the September 27 tour, which includes the Carolands and Villa Delizia from the 2016 event, plus La Dolphine. Any member may now sign up for that tour, as well as for the September 25 tour of Green Gables and Filoli. In either case, space is limited. Order now.



—Updating the Web Site

If you've made a visit to our web site, oh say, anytime in the last four years, you'd have noticed the content is a bit stale. We are in the process of updating the site. The newsletter archive has already been made current; you may now access all of the past issues through the most recent one, listed as Spring 2017. Within the next couple of months, we anticipate having photos, announcements, and other content up to date. By the way, we will consider posting any information, photos, etc., from members, subject to approval. Contact Don Andreini: dandreini@sbcglobal.net.

Other Events Of Interest

Filoli

Calendar of Centennial Events and Exhibits.
www.filoli.org/centennial/

Oakland Heritage Alliance

Walking Tours now through August.
<http://www.oaklandheritage.org/events.html>

California Historical Society

Exhibition: *On the Road to the Summer of Love*.
Now through September 10, 2017. 678 Mission St., San Francisco
www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibitions/upcoming_exhibitions

SF Heritage Lectures

Thursdays August 17, September 21, October 19, November 9.
6:00 pm, various locations. www.sfheritage.org/lecture-series

Preservation Action Council of San Jose

3rd Annual Open Homes Tour: 8 Spanish Revival houses designed by Wolfe & Higgins. Sunday, August 26, 2017, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
<http://www.wolfeandhigginstour.com/about.html>

AIA San Francisco

14th Annual Architecture and the City Festival: September 1 - 30, 2017. <https://aiasf.site-ym.com/?page=ArchandCity>

California Preservation Foundation

34th Annual Preservation Design Awards. Friday, October 13, 2017.
InterContinental Mark Hopkins Hotel, San Francisco
<https://californiapreservation.org/awards/nomination/>

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Conference: *PastForward*. November 14 - 17, 2017, Chicago, IL
<https://pastforwardconference.org/pastforward2017>

Vernacular Architecture Forum

Conference, *A Shared Heritage: Urban and Rural Experience on the Banks of the Potomac*. Alexandria, VA, May 2 - May 5, 2018.
<http://vernaculararchitectureforum.org/conference>

An Invitation

NCCSAH will gladly consider articles on Northern California architecture and architectural history, submitted by members for publication in the newsletter. Contact Don Andreini:
dandreini@sbcglobal.net



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The mission of the NCCSAH is to further the objectives of the Society of Architectural Historians of which the Northern California Chapter is an affiliate; promote the study and discussion of our region's architectural history and its related fields; visit significant works of architecture; and increase public awareness and appreciation of our architectural heritage. Membership is open to anyone interested in architectural history and its related fields who agrees to pay the annual dues and subscribe to the bylaws of the organization.

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a member of the National SAH to
become a member of NCCSAH**

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Please send your ideas or comments
concerning The Newsletter to:

Don Andreini

NCCSAH Newsletter Editor

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or to renew your dues return this form
and your dues check for \$20 made out to NCCSAH
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