



UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

Northern California Chapter
Society of Architectural Historians

The Newsletter

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The Wright Stuff: Experience Frank Lloyd Wright's Bay Area Work on NCCSAH Spring Tour

On May 24, the NCCSAH will explore two great Frank Lloyd Wright houses on the San Francisco Peninsula. Paul V. Turner, Stanford University Professor Emeritus and NCCSAH board member, will lead the tour. Professor Turner's recently published book *Frank Lloyd Wright and San Francisco* (Yale University Press, 2016) has been hailed as an "unprecedented look at the architect's storied relationship with San Francisco and the Bay Area." The tour includes lunch at the Hanna House on the Stanford University campus. Copies of Professor Turner's book will be available for sale.



Hanna House. Photo © Stanford University

Designed in 1936 for Stanford University education professor Paul Hanna and his wife, Jean, the Hanna House (also known as the "Honeycomb House") was the first Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building constructed in Northern California and one of several significant designs—including the iconic house Fallingwater in Bear Run, Pennsylvania—from the mid-1930s that brought him national recognition after almost a decade of inactivity.

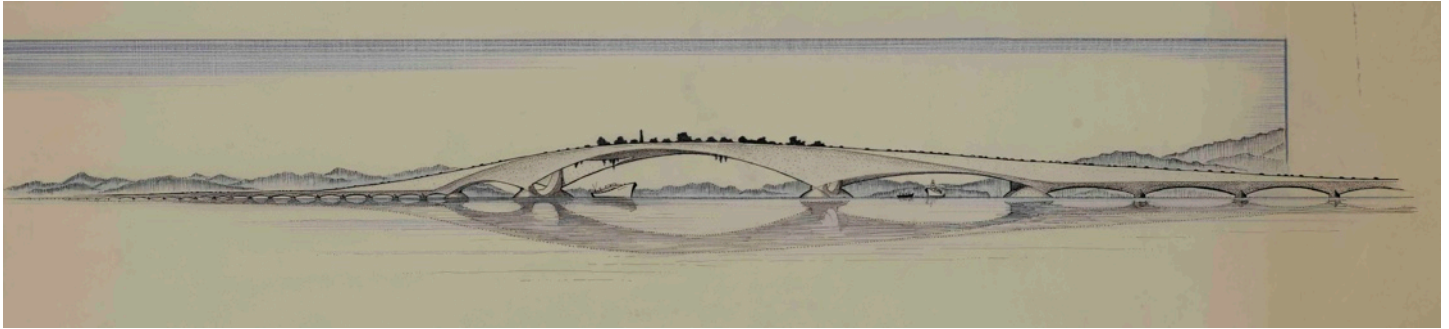
Commissioned in 1939, the Louise and Sidney Bazett house is a less well-known variation on the design of the Hanna House.

As friends of the Hannas, Louise and Sidney Bazett admired their residence and asked Wright to design a similar one for them on a lot they owned in Hillsborough.

Wright designed both the Hanna and Bazett houses on a hexagonal module. The Hanna House was Wright's first constructed project using a non-rectangular plan. Wright postulated a new sense of human movement and an informal, natural flow that resulted from the oblique angles created by the hexagonal module. Over the next 20 years, Wright increasingly developed a variety of non-rectilinear forms in his buildings. The Hanna House inaugurated an important characteristic of Wright's later work, in which he increasingly used triangles, hexagons, circles, and other non-rectangular forms.

—For tour details, turn to page 5

Frank Lloyd Wright and the San Francisco Bay Area



Bridge for San Francisco Bay, project (1949). Photo: Frank Lloyd Wright Archive

Little known is the fact that Frank Lloyd Wright designed nearly thirty projects for the San Francisco Bay Area, although only about a third of these were constructed. Moreover, Wright's Bay Area projects include some of his most innovative designs, as well as a broad range of building types: houses, a gift shop, a skyscraper (Wright's first skyscraper design, for Market Street in San Francisco), a civic center and post office, churches, a mortuary, a vast industrial building, an amphitheater, a fair pavilion, and a bridge across the San Francisco Bay.

Despite Wright's dislike of cities in general, he had a genuine affinity for San Francisco. In an interview in 1946, he said,

San Francisco is the most charming city in America. It is the most cosmopolitan. It is the most picturesque. [But] it is the most backward city architecturally. Yet it man-

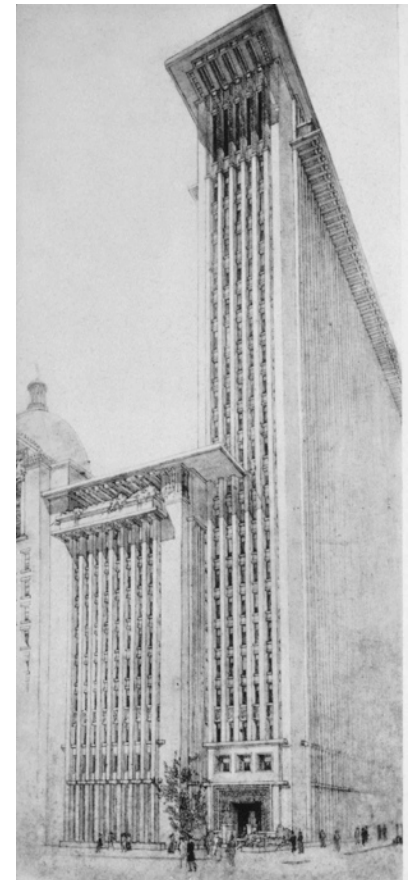
ages because of the character of its hills and environment and its people, who are the best looking in the country. I don't know how much of this is due to natural advantages or accident. But I like San Francisco.

Among the houses Wright designed for the Bay Area, probably the most significant are the Hanna House, at Stanford University, and the Bazett-Frank House, in Hillsborough. The Hanna House, built in 1937 by Professor Paul Hanna and his wife, Jean, was the first time Wright was able to talk clients into constructing a building with a plan based totally on non-rectangular geometry (in this case hexagonal), as a furtherance of his desire to "break open the box" of conventional architecture.

The Hannas not only agreed to this radical experiment, but made suggestions of their own, which Wright found stimulating—especially the notion of a house that would change, over time, evolving with the life of the family. The Hanna House was one of Wright's own favorite works, and he often came back to visit it over the rest of his career.



Hanna House interior. Photo: David Wakely



Although his design for the Call Building (1913) was not built, Wright came to see it as a prototype of an ideal skyscraper. Photo: Frank Lloyd Wright Archive

Like the Hanna House, the Bazett-Frank House, built in 1940, is based on a hexagonal module and is a variant of Wright's "Usonian" house-type, with a concrete floor slab and thin "sandwich-wall" construction. But perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the house has to do with the people who lived there. First were Sidney and Louise Bazett, who commissioned the house but lived there only a couple of years, due to personal reasons.

Thereafter it was rented for a while, and was bought in 1945 by Louis and Betty Frank, who had Wright design an addition to it. The person who rented the house, in the early 1940s, was Joseph Eichler—who later said the experience of living there was "a revelation to me. I admired Wright's rich design and asked myself if such houses could be built for ordinary people."

Interesting fact
The noted home builder Joseph Eichler rented the Bazett House from 1943-45.



Bazett House, left; above, interior. Photos: Scot Zimmerman

bers; unpainted wood and other natural materials; and concrete floor slabs containing radiant heat.

Wright's built and unbuilt projects in the Bay Area share no common characteristics. There is no San Francisco style—the way, for example, the architect's early houses in the Midwest represent a Prairie House type. Extending over nearly sixty years and including a broad range of building types, Wright's Bay Area works are distinctive mainly for their diversity and the unprecedented nature of many of them. They employ nearly all the kinds of construction, structural systems, and materials and geometric forms Wright used during his career. They demonstrate, perhaps more than his buildings in any other location, the amazing variety and innovation of his creations, and the fertility of his imagination.

—Thanks to NCCSAH board member and Stanford Professor Emeritus Paul V. Turner for generously providing this article for the newsletter.

Eichler then bought a company that produced tract houses and hired architects to create a higher quality of tract housing, based largely on Wright's Usonian models. Thousands of "Eichler Homes" were constructed in the Bay Area and elsewhere, and had an important influence on American suburban houses—as a result of the inspiration of Wright's house in Hillsborough.

Features in Eichler houses similar to Wright's designs included fluid interior spaces (for example, with combined living and dining areas); large expanses of glass opening onto gardens or courtyards, but not facing the street; exposed ceiling beams and other structural mem-

Wright on the Peninsula Tour
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2017
Time: 10:00 AM

Tour participants will gather at the Hanna House on the Stanford University Campus. Following a tour of the house and lunch we will carpool to the Bazett House. The program will conclude about 3:30 PM.

Registration: The cost of the tour for NCCSAH members is \$40, non-members \$60, and includes all admission fees and lunch.



Send your check made out to "NCCSAH" to Ward Hill, 3124 Octavia Street #102, San Francisco, CA 94123. Please include your name, email address (VERY important) and telephone number.

We have limited space for this tour so send your check as soon as possible. Priority will be determined based on the postmark date on the envelope with your check, not the date your check is received (to be fair to out-of-town members). Or you can hand deliver your check to 3124 Octavia Street, San Francisco.

Bazett House photo by Scot Zimmerman

Registration for Wright on the Peninsula Tour

[please print]

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email address _____

Registration: \$40 members _____ nonmembers _____

Costs include lunch and admission fees _____

Total Enclosed _____

Please make checks payable to NCCSAH
mail to:

Ward Hill
NCCSAH Wright on the Peninsula
3124 Octavia Street, #102
San Francisco, CA 94123

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

Nonmember cost also includes one year's
membership in NCCSAH.

Space is limited; reserve your place now!

NCCSAH Coming Attractions?



Nancy Stoltz (A.I.A, A.I.C.P.) hopes to arrange a tour of the grand Beaux Arts mansion, La Dolphine (1908, Lewis Hobart), set in four acres of French neoclassical gardens in Hillsborough.

Nancy prepared the National Register nomination for the property and would lead the tour.

While still very tentative at this time, we would like to include La Dolphine on a program with a couple of other Peninsula houses, sometime in the fall 2017.

We will send out word if and when the details can be worked out.

Photos: Nancy Stoltz

Palaces of the Peninsula Tour Draws Capacity Crowd

Because of the limited capacity, there were many members disappointed they could not be included in last fall's tour of great houses on the San Francisco peninsula. The program began at the Kohl Mansion, where Gerald Bell, producer of a documentary about the property, gave an introductory talk with many interesting tales of life in the house, and then led our group on a tour. Nancy Hanrahan, head of Mercy High School, which now owns the estate, helped to arrange our visit to the Kohl mansion.

Next on the itinerary, a short drive down the highway, was the Ralston Mansion. Part of the campus of Notre Dame de Namour University, the house has been vacant for a number of years, largely because of seismic issues. Thanks to the help of Mary Ellen Boyling, professor emerita at Notre Dame, we received free access to the remarkable interior, whose complete absence of furnishings allowed full focus on the house's unique details.

It was then time for lunch. We proceeded yet a bit further down the peninsula to Villa Delizia, where that home's owner and resident, Ms. Willy Werby, hosted our box luncheon on the terrace. Modest



The Uplands. Photo: Bill Kostura

and homey in comparison to the grand houses we visited that day, and the only one of the properties on the tour not in institutional use, we were treated to the experience of a house that is more than a house; it is a home, with the distinctive and individual touches that express the life and character of its occupant.

Our day concluded with two of the grandest of the grand houses: the Carolands and the Uplands. Mavie Mendelsohn, executive director of the Carolands Foundation, arranged for our visit, and Paul Price was our tour guide. Finally, John Draper, with the Crystal Springs Uplands School, opened the Uplands to us and gave an informative introduction to the tour.

Our thanks to all those who generously hosted us that day and helped to make our experience of the Peninsula's Gilded Age so informative and entertaining. NCCSAH members should also be aware of the tremendous effort President Ward Hill put into organizing this popular program—and many others over the years—as well as directing the event providing commentary at the tour sites. The evident pleasure of the participants rewarded his efforts.



*Enjoying a lunch break on the patio at Villa Delizia.
Photo: Paul Turner*

Peninsula Mansions Photo Gallery



Top of page, left to right:
 Ralston House; capital of pilaster flanking fireplace in the
 great hall, Kohl Mansion; entry of the great hall,
 Kohl Mansion. Photos: Bill Kostura
 Second row left to right:
 Ward Hill offers commentary inside the Ralston House;
 Ward and owner Willy Werby at Villa Delizia; the group
 takes in the unique details of the Villa.
 Bottom: Gerald Bell welcomes chapter members to the
 Kohl Mansion. Photos: Paul Turner



In Memoriam - Friends Passing



Susan Cerny and her husband Joe enthusiastically attended many of our events over the last 20 years. They hosted a wonderful reception for our members at their Inverness home during the NCCSAH

2006 tour of Point Reyes. It is with great sadness that we note Susan's death on December 1, 2016.

San Francisco-born, she took up residence in Berkeley upon receiving a bachelor's degree in art history from Cal. She was an active artist before being drawn to architectural history and preservation in the 1970s. Over the years, Susan served on the board of Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, including two terms as president, and was a member and chairperson of the Berkeley Landmarks Commission. Both the City of Berkeley and California Preservation Foundation honored her for her many contributions to the cause of preservation.

Susan's columns on local architectural history for the *Berkeley Gazette*, the *Berkeley Voice* and the *Daily Planet* helped educate her community to the importance of architectural preservation. These articles and text for walking tour brochures she composed found their way into her first book, *Berkeley Landmarks, An Illustrated Guide to Berkeley, California's Architectural History* (1994, updated 2001). She was the editor of and a contributor to *An Architectural Guidebook to San Francisco and the Bay Area* (2007). All the while, she continued to be a productive artist, as well.

The family suggests donations in Susan's memory to Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association.

Above adapted from Pt. Reyes Light.

The two large groups of NCCSAH members who took our tour of San Francisco's Chinatown in the spring of 2015 will no doubt remember our guide, the architect and historian, Philip Choy. The wealth of his knowledge on the life and history of the community where he grew up, delivered often with touches of humor, held

his audience in rapt attention. It was with great sadness, then, that we learned of his death, on March 16.



Widely recognized as a leading authority on the Chinese American experience, Phil Choy devoted many years to studying and researching the subject and to increasing public awareness of the contributions of the Chinese to this country. He co-taught the nation's first college-level Chinese American history course at San Francisco State (1969) and hosted the first extensive documentary on the subject, on PBS, in the early 1970s.

Through his advocacy efforts, Phil gained greater recognition for the contribution Chinese workers made to the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and for the experience of Chinese entering this country through the Angel Island Immigration Station. He submitted the case report that led to listing the latter in the National Register.

In other preservation activity, he helped secure landmark designation for the Julia Morgan-designed Chinatown YWCA and later supported the effort of the Chinese Historical Society of America's effort secure the building for its museum and study center. He served terms as board member and president of CHSA, and was a member of the San Francisco Landmarks Board and the State Historical Resources Commission.

Above adapted from CHSA web site.

NCCSAH Responds to Mare Island Plea for Financial Assistance

In response to a plea for aid, the NCCSAH board of directors voted, last fall, to send a \$500 donation from chapter's reserves to the nonprofit Mare Island Historic Park Foundation.

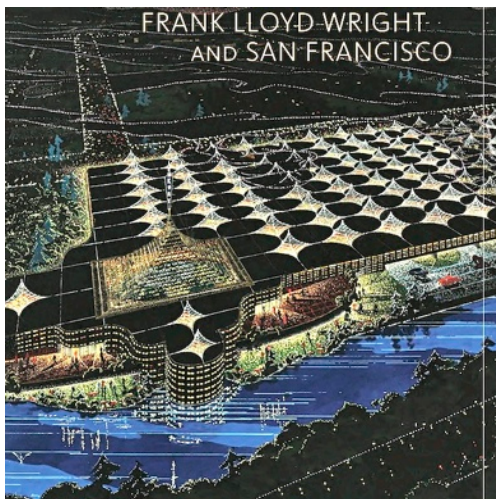
Our members will recall the exceptional experience of the National Register-listed district with its array of historic ship-building and repair facilities, naval officer residences and the unique St. Peter's Chapel (shown here) that were included in our Mare Island program in the fall of 2013.

The usual burden of maintaining historic properties of this significance was compounded by damage resulting from the 2014 Napa earthquake. While awaiting confirmation of FEMA funding for repairs, the foundation is seeking to address the pressing needs of the chapel: a new roof, repairs to the exterior walls and replacement of the shields protecting the windows.



The appeal for assistance came from Mark Hutchings, a member of the park foundation board of directors. He specifically requested donations that would go toward maintenance of the chapel with its remarkable collection of Tiffany stained glass windows, as well as for the museum, the cemetery and two of the homes on Captain's Row.

If you wish to supplement the chapter's gift with a personal donation, send your checks, made out to Mare Island Historic Park Foundation, and mail them to the attention of Ms. Joyce Giles, Curator, 1100 Railroad Ave., Vallejo, CA 94592. All donations are tax deductible.



Frank Lloyd Wright and San Francisco, by Paul V. Turner. Yale University Press, 2016

The Stanford Bookstore will have copies of Paul Turner's book, *Frank Lloyd Wright and San Francisco*, for sale during our visit to the Hannah House. List price is \$65. Credit card sales only. Paul will gladly inscribe your copy.

For members not taking the tour, Frank Lloyd Wright and San Francisco is widely available in bookstores throughout the Bay Area.

Pacific Northwest Conference

Our friends at the Marion Dean Ross/Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians have provided preliminary details on their upcoming conference.

Scheduled for June 16-18, 2017, in Victoria, BC, the conference centers on the theme *Commemorations*. The National Park Service has defined a commemorative property as one that has acquired significance through age, tradition or symbolic value, rather than through association with an event or person. Commemorations that the conference will celebrate include the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Dominion of Canada, the 100th anniversary of the U.S. National Park System and the 50th anniversary of the U.S. National Historic Preservation Act (both observed in 2016).

Principal venue for the conference will be the Wentworth Villa, an 1863 house that at the time of its construction was possibly the largest residence in Victoria and possibly anywhere west of the Rockies. The Villa houses a new heritage museum focused on residential architecture.

The preliminary conference program is available at http://www.sahmdr.org/conf/VictoriaSAHMDR_preliminary_program_2017.pdf

Other Events Of Interest

Filoli

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

Oakland Heritage Alliance

Lecture: *Fairy Tale, Disneyesque, Hansel and Gretel-America's Whimsical Homes of the 1920s*. Thursday April 20, 2017.
Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., Oakland.
www.oaklandheritage.org

Berkeley Architectural Heritage

42nd Spring House Tour and Garden Reception:
John Hudson Thomas & Friends in Claremont Park.
Sunday, May 7, 2017, 1:00-5:00 pm
berkeleyheritage.com/housetours/2017_spring_house_tour.html

California Historical Society

Exhibition: *On the Road to the Summer of Love*.
May 12 - September 10, 2017. 678 Mission St., San Francisco
www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibitions/upcoming_exhibitions

SF Heritage Soirée 2017

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love. Saturday, May 13, 2017, 6:00 pm-Midnight. Ritz-Carlton Hotel.
www.sfheritage.org/upcoming_events/soiree/

Oakland Museum of California

Exhibition: *Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing*,
May 13 - August 13, 2017
<http://museumca.org/exhibitions>

Society for Industrial Archeology

46th Annual Conference: Houston TX. May 18 - June 3, 2017.
www.sia-web.org/sia-46th-annual-conference-houston-texas/

Vernacular Architecture Forum

Conference, *Two Utahs: Religious and Secular Landscapes in the Great Basin West*. Salt Lake City, UT, May 31 - June 3, 2017.
<http://vernaculararchitectureforum.org/saltlakecity-2017>

Society of Architectural Historians

Annual International Conference: Glasgow, Scotland, June 7-11, 2017.
www.sah.org/conferences-and-programs/2017-conference-glasgow

California Preservation Foundation

Annual Conference: *Preservation at the Forefront*. Celebrating founding of CPF 40 years ago. May 10 - 13, 2017. Pasadena
www.californiapreservation.org/education/conference



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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.

NCCCSAH Officers

President, Rich Brandi
Vice President, Paul Turner
Treasurer, Ward Hill
Secretary, Don Andreini
Membership, Ian Berke

**Remember you do not have to be
a member of the National SAH to
become a member of NCCSAH**

Join or Renew Now!!

Individual \$20.00

Student \$10.00

Make checks payable to NCCSAH

Please send your ideas or comments
concerning The Newsletter to:

Don Andreini

NCCSAH Newsletter Editor

dandreini@sbcglobal.net

To become a member of the Northern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians

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

Ian Berke, NCCSAH
Ian Berke Real Estate
2824 Clay Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

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Affiliation _____

Occupation _____

Street Address _____

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Work Phone _____

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