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Heath garden looking south from top of embankment. Royston designed outdoor table being set for an al fresco meal.

University of California Berkeley, College of Environmental Design Archives (CEDA) Robert Royston Collection. Photo by Robert Royston.
IN HIS OWN BACKYARD

Robert Royston’s Modern Gardens in Marin County

By JC Miller, ASLA
Robert Royston had a long and successful career as a landscape architect, but it is in his three of his earliest works, mid-century gardens in Marin County, that he was able to explore the dynamic spatial compositions that exemplify his sophisticated understanding of three-dimensional design. In these gardens, the Wilson, Nelson and Heath gardens, he devised innovative modern solutions to address the challenges of topography and to respond to client need. His design for the Wilson garden involved screening an unsightly downhill view with a horizontal trellis he called a "sky plane." In the Nelson garden, he worked with architect Joseph Stein to create a structured terrace garden with intricate geometry derived from the architecture. For ceramist Edith Heath, architect Joseph Allen Stein, in Mill Valley, California - an experimental modernist landscape architectural firms. His landscape design career began with his own firm, building on the collaborative, interdisciplinary model developed with his first partners. The next partnership, Royston, Hanamoto, and Moyes, quickly established itself by accepting important residential and civic commissions. The firm's expansion into public work was particularly meaningful for Royston, who, while his design work, he called them "Public Gardens," as the natural evolution of his residential gardens and important contributions to the larger framework of the urban and suburban environment.

In his earlier residential work, Royston developed an approach to design that would characterize his career. After interviewing a client and visiting the site, he produced a scaled plan based on a topographical survey of the property. Next, he drew a garden diagram showing areas of use arranged to avoid functional conflicts, such as placing a children's play area next to a quiet space for contemplation. Royston used the diagrams to inform his final design, considering alternatives as he worked, but always delivering a single, finished plan. Presentation drawings often included isometric plans highlighting the spatial qualities of the design and perspective sketches to help clients visualize their gardens. For clients who enjoyed gardening, Royston located the planting beds without specifying individual species. This was a design strategy he had learned while working in Thomas Church's office. Like his modernist peers, he regarded space as the primary medium of landscape architecture and respected the intrinsic qualities of materials. His use of plants emphasized their role in defining space, and he strove to mitigate the multi-sensory dimension of spatial experience, especially color, texture, and scent.

His formal vocabulary was influenced by twentieth-century painting and sculpture, and he strove to create environments suitable for modern living. Certainly, spatial manipulation was not a new design concept developed in postwar California gardens. The Baroque gardens of seventeenth-century France, the villa gardens made by aristocrats of the Italian Renaissance, the prehistoric sites such as Stonehenge enclosed spaces, controlled views, and manipulated perspectives. What was novel in Royston's approach was the application of a modernist design vocabulary and cubic spatial concepts to the suburban California garden. Promotion of these art-driven ideas put Royston and his partners at the forefront of landscape design in the postwar period. In earlier periods art had been incorporated into the garden as a static element, and landscape gardening was sometimes discussed as more "fun projects" that allowed him to develop commissions. Presenting a garden as an initial design created by his friend and eventual neighbor, the architect Joseph Allen Stein - in 1947 and lived there until his death in 2008. His landscape design career began with part-time work for Thomas Church while he was still a student at the University of California, Berkeley. Following his graduation in 1940 with a degree in landscape architecture, Royston began working full-time for Church, who was at that time one of the country's most prominent garden designers. By the late-1940s, postwar prosperity, advances in technology, and a surge in population had led to a deal of professional attention, Royston was required to deal with the site's challenging problems. The Wilsons asked him to enlarge the too-small garden, provide privacy for its users, and do something to improve the view. The design that he proposed in response was complex and unusual, so he built a model to communicate his ideas to the client, a practice that was more typical of his work on larger commercial or institutional commissions.

The usual strategy of expanding the garden by terracing the slope was not an option since the gradient was too steep. Instead, Royston substantially increased the flat yard area by extending its width by 5 feet and its length by 14 feet. He supported its extension with a wood cribbing structure. At the top end of the enlarged garden space he

WILSON GARDEN, MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 1948

This small commission for a young couple was quite challenging. The site afforded a beautiful panoramic view toward Mt. Tamalpais, a local landmark, but it was marred by an ugly middle ground. Also, the slope allotted by the architect for a garden on the steep slope was far too small to be of much use for entertaining and other outdoor activities. Architect Gryffid Partridge's one-story house was quite small, consisting of one bedroom, a living room, kitchen, and garage. Its steep narrow lot was flanked by houses on either side that looked into the small, flat 10 x 20-foot space Partridge's grading plan had provided for a garden at the rear of the house. The view to the west of Mount Tamalpais was appealing, but the middle ground was dominated by a conspicuous road and an ugly four-story apartment building at the base of the lot's steep slope. As was the case with the Nafiy garden, where he created a breakthrough design that was published widely and gained a great deal of professional attention, Royston was required to deal with the site's challenging problems. The Wilsons asked him to enlarge the too-small garden, provide privacy for its users, and do something to improve the view. The design that he proposed in response was complex and unusual, so he built a model to communicate his ideas to the client, a practice that was more typical of his work on larger commercial or institutional commissions. The usual strategy of expanding the garden by terracing the slope was not an option since the gradient was too steep. Instead, Royston substantially increased the flat yard area by extending its width by 5 feet and its length by 14 feet. He supported its extension with a wood cribbing structure. At the top end of the enlarged garden space he
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He suggested Royston for site planning and design of the garden.

The clients for the new Mill Valley project were a recently married couple, Helen and Nathan Nelson. In anticipation of a growing family, the couple asked Stein and Royston to allow for expansion of the house in the design plan. They also desired as much functional outdoor space as was possible, given the limitations of the sloped lot on which they planned to build. Stein responded with a 1,200-square-foot one-bedroom home and designed an addition of two bedrooms to be built when needed. Royston's garden plan provided a series of outdoor rooms that related functionally to the indoor spaces and significantly enlarged the living area of the house.

The floor plan arranged the living spaces in a rectangular volume set roughly parallel to the street above. Stein offset the carport fifteen feet and rotated it 30 degrees, creating a covered porch that opened into the east-facing back garden. Stein brought light and air into the covered outdoor area by means of a 6-foot-square opening to the roof. With this gesture Stein introduced yet another set of angles to his composition, as the opening was turned at a 45-degree angle to the carport walls. Royston in turn expanded the paved patio area and partially enclosed it with a curved vertical picket screen, shielding the patio from the view of the driveway.

Royston and Stein worked collaboratively, blending ideas so that house and garden functioned as a coherent composition. Especially important was the placement of the house and the shaping of the hillside to maximize the useful area for both house and garden. Even mundane details such as the relationship of driveway and carport were worked out cooperatively. Stein's design relied on a single roof plane connecting the house and carport. Matching the floor level of both structures would have resulted in an uncomfortably steep driveway and elevating the roof of the carport would have interrupted the important architectural design line. To resolve the problem, the team decided to raise the carport floor level 30 inches above that of the house and covered patio. The trade-off in this solution was reduced headroom in the garage and no exit door to the patio. Royston took advantage of this situation, making the route from carport to front door more interesting by introducing a gentle curve to the path so as to make its way along the perimeter screen. How people moved through the spaces he designed was an important aspect of the garden that he approached thoughtfully. Later in life when discussing his ideas about design Royston would talk about the experience of the vertical or horizontal curve. Because he believed that people preferred to move through space along gentle curves or shallow angles, he avoided 90-degree angles, both for ease of circulation and also to soften the meeting point of vertical and horizontal planes.

This preference for oblique angles and geometries can be seen in the exuberant non-orthogonal paving pattern that Royston introduced on the east side of the house. Building on the tension that Stein created with the

above: Wilson garden looking north. The fence, driveway picket screen, and rectangular seating area partially enclosed it with a curved vertical picket screen. The trade-off in this solution was reduced headroom in the garage and no exit door to the patio. Royston took advantage of this situation, making the route from carport to front door more interesting by introducing a gentle curve to the path so as to make its way along the perimeter screen. How people moved through the spaces he designed was an important aspect of the garden that he approached thoughtfully. Later in life when discussing his ideas about design Royston would talk about the experience of the vertical or horizontal curve. Because he believed that people preferred to move through space along gentle curves or shallow angles, he avoided 90-degree angles, both for ease of circulation and also to soften the meeting point of vertical and horizontal planes.

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Top to bottom, left to right: Nelson garden looking south. Royston introduced the screen wall and water feature on the south side of the garden as a focal point for the view out from the living room. Nelson House View from Top of Driveway. Stein’s continuous roof line from the living room. Royston introduced the screen wall that also serves to shield the laundry drying area from view. The screen wall includes painted plywood panels and decorative relief geometry that reflects the structural system of the roof. Unfortunately, no documentation of color photographs are currently available to accurately confirm the colors of the house, screen, or decorative embellishments of the garden screen wall. Similar features in other Royston designed gardens of this period, including his own home and the Wilson garden discussed above, allow for speculation that the body color of the house and screen was likely a red-brown, the triangular inserts a light yellow, and the plywood square an orange-red. This last color was a Royston favorite that he called “Chinese Red” and used frequently throughout his career.

Existing groves of California coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia) and volunteer blackwood acacia (Acacia melanoxylon) provided Royston with clear edge boundaries on the north and south sides of the Nelson garden. The irregularly-shaped parcel is-stratified between streets running uphill and downhill, so the property was open on the east and west sides. Along the south edge of the property, presumably to address privacy concerns due to the proximity of the closest neighbor, Royston reinforced the grove edge with a 6-foot-tall fence backed by a hedge of Karo (Pittosporum crassifolium). Large-scale trees were restricted to the perimeter of the garden. He called for large-scale evergreens at the street, including Monterey pine (Pinus radiata) and a dwarf blue gum eucalyptus (Eucalyptus globulus ‘compacta’). Within the garden he specified smaller deciduous trees, including his favorite patio tree, the Japanese maple. An exception to this is a large California native tree, the big leaf maple (Acer macrophyllum). This tree was planted quite close to the house on the west side, in the area proposed for the future bedroom addition. This fast-growing tree was likely a temporary measure to provide shade on the dwelling until it was removed for the expansion. A multi-trunked coast Myoporum (Myoporum laetum ‘Carsonii’) is visible at the south-west corner of the back garden. The apparent age and size of this tree are inconsistent with other new planting in the garden, and it can be assumed that this tree predated the house. Royston incorporated existing trees into his planting plans when it was possible, another practice that he learned while working for Church. Not native to the region, Myoporum is known to self-seed in Marin, so it is likely a volunteer that Royston retained.

This move reflects a frugality that is seen in many of Royston’s early gardens. Limited resources for construction and garden installation in the immediate postwar years often prompted the use of readily-available species that were easily propagated. The Nelson garden includes prolific perennial shrubs such as geranium, Niles lilac (Syringa orientalis), and Hahn’s ivy (Hedera helix ‘Hahn’s’), these plants can also be found in the first iterations of the Royston and Stein gardens. A significant portion of the site was also left open for native and natural grasses – likely a planting decision prompted by limited funds available for the initial garden installation. Accent planting in the garden included dwarf umbrella palm (Cyperus alternifolius) in the raised planters at the garden pool and northwest corner of the house as well as citrus and golden bamboo (Phyllostachys aurea) in wooden plant tubs designed by Royston. It was not unusual for Royston to design site-specific planters, benches, and other furniture for his gardens. His interest in this expanded to a line of outdoor furniture offered for sale by Kibbo, Royston and Williams in the early to mid-1930s. Prototypes for many of the pieces from this line can be seen in the garden that he designed for Edith and Brian Heath in Tiburon, California.

>HEATH GARDEN, TIBURON, CALIFORNIA 1951

From 1940 to 1950, the urban population of California grew by nearly fifty percent, the greatest increase in the nation. The World War II home-front effort brought industrial production to California coastal cities in general, and the San Francisco Bay area in particular, on a scale many times greater than anything seen prior to the war. The influx of people from other parts of the country who moved to California to work in wartime industry, plus the thousands of returning veterans who arrived at the ports of Oakland and San Francisco and chose to remain, permanently transformed the Bay region. This boom in growth was nourished by post-war industrial expansion, high-paying jobs, and educational opportunities offered by the GI Bill. In response to the acute housing shortage, the Federal Housing Authority offered home mortgages, which financed the resultant housing and construction boom. Booster rhetoric sustained the alluring myth of the state as a paradise, blessed with a mild climate,
Clockwise: Heath garden looking north. Garden screens terminate this view along the ridge.

Concept plan Heath-Leek garden. This Royston/Heath plan shows a garden designed to meet the needs of the two couples that shared the home.

Heath garden looking south from garden room. The continuous level surface made possible by the bridge deck is clearly visible in this photo. The low table in foreground is a Royston/Heath collaboration that was part of the ERW furniture line.

All images courtesy University of California Berkeley, College of Environmental Design Archives, CEDA Robert Royston Collection. Photos by Robert Royston.
Edith Heath and her husband Brian relocated to the wooded hills of Marin County. Ceramicist Joseph Stein and many other architects, designers, artists, and performers were among those who sought an ideal suburban life in the wooded hills of Marin County. Edith Heath and her husband Brian relocated their business to Marin in 1947, when they leased a large workspace in Sausalito to house their business operations. In 1949, the barge was floated to a waterfront parcel that the Heaths purchased on the Tiburon peninsula and then lifted to a stable position on shore. After buying out the other couple, the Heaths developed the houseboat, turning it into an on-land-residence and garden. Edith Heath turned to her friend Robert Royston for site planning and design of the garden.

As was the case with the Wilson and Nelson gardens, the Heath’s home was located down slope from the nearest road. Because of the unique nature of the structure and its situation on the side of an embankment, it was impractical to build a garage adjacent to the house. On the site plan, Royston located parking, a carport, and storage on an upper level that was roughly 10 feet above the house. To hide the automobiles from view of the house and garden, Royston placed a vertical picket screen at the top of the slope and planted the side slope heavily with evergreen toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia), a robust regional native plant well-suited to the bayside microclimate. A broad, gently sloping concrete path and a set of equally broad garden stairs brought residents and guests from the parking area to the living terrace and the entry to the home.

As an improvised structure, the houseboat-turned-home lacked an obvious front door, so in the initial concept drawing Royston guided visitors to the entry by means of another picket screen that angled dynamically across the central terrace. This screen divided that terrace into two spaces, presumably to allocate private zones for both couples who were to share the dwelling. This feature changed when the Heaths became the sole residents. In the built garden, the entry was shifted from the center of the structure to the north end, a location that Royston made prominent with a strong paving pattern of asymmetrical rectangles, an angled lawn panel, and a dramatic trellis anchored in the hillside. Spanning the entire width of the terrace, the trellis terminated in a garden room that Royston developed in collaboration with the Heaths. The garden room functioned as a foyer to the house, defining a space outside the glass entry with open grids of steel and wood, something like a modernist lath house. It was roofed in retractable canvas panels to provide shade in summer. Edith Heath embellished the space with tile murals (the plywood panels seen in the photos accompanying this article would eventually be covered in tile) and a kinetic sculpture of ceramic rings. It was furnished with a number of Royston-designed pieces, including a “sunken” lounger and planter tubs. The structure was painted in Royston’s favorite color, “Chinese Red,” and trimmed with black accents. This color scheme extended to wooden construction throughout the garden.

Above: The color mosaic of planting developed by Royston and Heath is visible in this photo. University of California Berkeley, College of Environmental Design Archives (CEDA) Robert Royston Collection. Photo by Robert Royston.

Below: Heath garden plan 1951. This plan was developed from archival materials and period photographs. Collection of the author.

To the north of the garden room was a sunken garden that accommodated a stairway to a lower level of the dwelling and a second stairway to the shoreline. The planting in the sunken garden took advantage of the protected microclimate and included exotic species such as banana (Musa spp.), a choice not typically seen in Royston-designed gardens; it likely reflects input from Edith Heath. In the initial concept sketch, the sunken garden was planned as a lower level deck. Beyond the sunken garden Royston’s paving pattern ended in a gravel area that included a vegetable garden and laundry drying area. The garden room and trellis functioned as a visually-permeable divider separating the open public and social spaces of the garden from more private areas and the vegetable beds. Two wood frame screens with solid concrete panels were staggered and offset into two spaces, presumably to allocate private zones for both couples who were to share the dwelling. This feature changed when the Heaths became the sole residents. In the built garden, the entry was shifted from the center of the structure to the north end, a location that Royston made prominent with a strong paving pattern of asymmetrical rectangles, an angled lawn panel, and a dramatic trellis anchored in the hillside. Spanning the entire width of the terrace, the trellis terminated in a garden room. Edith Heath turned to her friend Robert Royston for site planning and design of the garden. As was the case with the Wilson and Nelson gardens, the Heath’s home was located down slope from the nearest road. Because of the unique nature of the structure and its situation on the side of an embankment, it was impractical to build a garage adjacent to the house. On the site plan, Royston located parking, a carport, and storage on an upper level that was roughly 10 feet above the house. To hide the automobiles from view of the house and garden, Royston placed a vertical picket screen at the top of the slope and planted the side slope heavily with evergreen toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia), a robust regional native plant well-suited to the bayside microclimate. A broad, gently sloping concrete path and a set of equally broad garden stairs brought residents and guests from the parking area to the living terrace and the entry to the home.

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Clockwise: Heath garden looking north from top of embankment. The light definingissa and garden rooms are visible in this photo. University of California Berkeley, College of Environmental Design Archives (CEDA) Robert Royston Collection. Photo by Robert Royston.

Pages from ERW Furniture Brochure. Eckbo Royston and Williams offered a line of indoor/outdoor furniture designed by Robert Royston. Collection of the author.

**LOUNGE (L-74)**

A comfortable head and foot rest rolls easily on hard-wheeled casters. Pad is supported by a head of plastic pipe which will not rot or mildew. Constructed of redwood with hard-wheeled wheels and cylindrical head rest. From 74” long, 34” wide. Takes very standard pool or custom pad (74).
The center of the Heath garden is a gen-

erous open and level space paved in a mix of

materials including concrete, tuff, brick, and

wood decking. Royston's plan cut slightly

into the upslope bank of the hill and used the

material generated to fill downslope, by

this means expanding the area for concrete

paving and turf. As a result of this cut, a sea-

sonal retaining wall somewhat reminiscent

of the perimeter seat wall in the Wilson garden

defines the west and south sides of the
terraced on all sides by upslope embankment

and retaining wall or structures, the
central space of the garden is focused in

ward and protected. The property has a

stunning, unimpeded view of the Bay look-

ing north and east which was enjoyed from

the vantage point of decks that the Heaths

constructed on the north and east side of the

Dornfein. Given the decks and location of the

home, Royston resisted the temptation to

incorporate the view into this garden. There

was an initial glimpse of the Bay from the top

of the garden stairway that disappeared as the

visitor descended into the garden.

The decking that runs the length of the
terrace on its eastern side is in reality a wide

bridge that spans the gap between the slop-

ing front yard and the building. Royston did

not divide the open central space physically,

but the paving pattern of the concrete terrace,

a combination of asymmetrical rectangular

sections with contrasting colors and surface

finishes, suggests sub-spaces that might be

used for gardens or gathering points during

A lawn panel with a complementary biomorphic

shape further defines the ground plane. The

strong, bighorn surface pattern is characteristic

of the gardens and public plazas that Royston

designed during this period. He often mixed

planting types, if in this case concrete and brick

- with irregularly shaped lawn panels and

shadow from overhead structures to create

large-scale abstract ground patterns. These

were first and foremost functional spaces
designed to respond to the needs of those who
occupied them, but they were also large works
of art. When looking at a Royston-drawn

garden plan, the compositional strategies of

ear art painting are unmistakable. Conversely,

when looking at a painting by Robert Royston,

the references to landscape design are obvious.

This was often the case with many of his

Martin County gardens, groves of California

crest live oak (Quercus agrifolia) provide a
dark evergreen frame for the Heath garden.

Royston was an advocate of the Japanese idea

of borrowed landscape and likely considered

the project and design visible from the interior

of the garden as a part of the scheme. 26

Within the bounds of the managed garden, Royston's

approach to plant combinations was as paint-

erly as his landscape designs. Unfortunately,

no planting plans remain for reference, but the

closest to period photographs provides insights

into the planting design. A great vari-

ty of colors and textures are evident in the

garden: those seen in the Wilson and Heath gardens

are arranged for massing and contrast. By Royston's account, Edith Heath was enthusiastic about her garden, and it

certain she had a hand in plant selection. 27

Apart from the fruit trees incorporated into

the vegetable garden on the north end, there are

few trees in the garden. A patio scale tree

that runs along the east side of the property

across the path from the garden room and a

small pomegranate tree (Punica granatum)

stood to the west edge to provide afternoon shade on the
center terrace.

The Heath garden shares a number of

important qualities with the Wilson and Nelson gardens. Each of these places was

spatially adventurous. Rather than address the

hillside locations with stepped terraces or
docks cantilevered from the building, Royston

found site-specific design alternatives
to address client need. These modern gardens

were closely integrated with the architecture of

the home, in many instances supplementing

the relatively small interior spaces. There is an

appealingly sparse quality to these gardens

created in the aftermath of wartime fragility.

And finally, while each design was a response to

a unique place and client, all were guided by

an articulate vision that saw the suburban

garden both as an important functional space

for the building and an opportunity for

art. Together this trio of gardens typifies the

innovative landscape modernism that Royston

developed in his own backyard. 28


Endnotes
1. This collection probably is

in excess of 200 in number.

Media and learning media

memories of Royston's gardens

are plentiful, and dated from

his Standard Oil Rod and

Gun Club period (1938), Barry

Gardens. Scholastic, Berkeley,

California. (New York: Dun
deyall), 1993. The Wilson Garden

is illustrated in Joseph E. How-

Fucking, New York, 1999. The

Royston Collection was formed

in 1982 by the City and County

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2. Recorded interview of Robert

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3. The narrative description of

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6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

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29. Ibid.

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32. Ibid.

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39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.
INTRODUCTION

A pioneer of sustainable landscape design, Robert Deering had a broad and lasting effect on landscape architecture, not just in California but worldwide. In a career spanning 60 years, Deering used Modernist design principles and an approach to site design based upon environmental factors to create landscapes for numerous private residential projects in and around the Sacramento Valley. In addition, he designed several college and university campuses, as well as commercial projects, collaborating with some of the finest architects of the day. Even more significant than his fine executed works was his role as an educator, transmitting his innovations in sustainable landscape design and influencing generations of students of landscape architecture.

Deering's impact on his profession was recognized in 1995 when he was named a Member of the Council of Fellows of the ASLA, due largely to the efforts of Donald Fox of the National Park Service. Fox had a broader and lasting effect on landscape architecture, not just in California but worldwide.

THE TEACHING YEARS: COOLING THROUGH SITE DESIGN

In the 1950s, before air conditioning units were common-place, and long before cities like Sacramento in California’s hot Central Valley enacted tree-shading ordinances for parking lots, Robert Deering was teaching his students about the cooling effects of strategic planting and site design. His prescient theories evolved from scientific experimentation. Early in his role as assistant professor and department chair of the landscape architecture department at Davis, he and his students, along with other agriculture department faculty, constructed a simple cabin-style trailer, which could be moved around as needed for research purposes. The trailer had two rooms: a control room and a larger room where various sensors were placed to record temperature changes throughout the day. A weather station was sited near the trailer.

Students and faculty recorded the changes in room temperature based on location, coverage by trees and foliage, and orientation relative to sun and shade angles. In one example, significant cooling effects were noted when the trailer was sited to the east of a grouping of eucalyptus trees which provided protective shade from the hot midday and afternoon sun, while also offering morning sunlight.

BIographical INFORMATION

Born on July 25, 1920, Robert Bowman Deering grew up in Orono, Maine. He received a BS in Ornamental Horticulture-Landscape Design in 1942 from the University of Maine, where his love of plants, design, teaching, photography and travel was nurtured. During WWII, he enlisted in the United States Navy, first with the Seabees in California and later at Midshipman’s School at Notre Dame. He shipped out from San Francisco to the Pacific as a Navigator on the USS Jaguar. Deering later recounted stories evoking the 1935 movie Mr. Roberts, including keeping plants in his cabin collected from Pacific islands while the ship off-loaded its cargo of aviation gasoline. After the war, he entered Cornell University, where he earned an MS in 1947 and a PhD in 1949 in landscape architecture. His doctoral thesis, Organic Planning in Landscape Design, “dealt largely with plant materials in relation to landscape design.” While teaching a class on landscape architecture as a graduate teaching assistant at Cornell, he met and then married Alice Duke from Saratoga Springs, NY. The Deering’s had three children: Carol, Paul and Roberta.

Deering began his career in 1949 as an academic, teaching at the University of California, Davis in the Landscape Architecture Department, the following year he was appointed chairman of the department. He received a Fulbright grant in 1955 to travel to the Netherlands, where he taught landscape architecture at Wageningen’s Agricultural Institute and also presented a paper, “Horticulture and the Improvement of Hot-Climate Environments,” at the 1955 International Horticultural Congress in The Hague. In travels throughout Europe he continued his studies of drought-resistant plants. Deering left UC Davis in 1957 to open his professional practice. In 1960 he began his twenty-year career with the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

These experiments, carried out from approximately 1953 to 1956, formed the basis of much of Robert Deering’s teachings and early design work. He published many papers, some in conjunction with his peers at Davis, and an instruction manual, Planning the Garden, for students as well as the general public, reflecting his research into heating and cooling through site design. Planning the Garden laid out the basics of site selection, sun and shade patterns, placement of outdoor living areas, public versus private spaces, play spaces, and the use of devices such as fencing, pergolas, water and tree cover to control the garden climate. This site design work was enhanced by his love of horticulture, including research into both the cooling effects of plants and drought tolerant plants, as well as his enthusiastic embrace of the “modern design” aesthetic of the time. E. Gregory McPherson described Robert Deering as the “Father of Solar Control” in his 1989 book, Energy-Conserving Site Design.”
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK PLANNING AND DESIGN

Starting these inventive designs for private clients, Deering moved into larger-scale site and planning work when he began his twenty-year career with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks). Driven by the post-war population boom in California, the state's parks and beaches were expanding at a rapid pace. Beginning in the 1930s, the state had embarked on a concerted effort to acquire land holdings along the southern coast of California, and coastal acquisitions were ramped up from the 1950s to 1970's. Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown's administration (1959-1067) provided significant funding for state parks as well as recreation facilities for state water projects and reservoirs.

The regional Parks offices where Deering worked produced projects as varied as historic Angel Island State Park, located in the San Francisco Bay, which preserved Civil War-era sites and the Immigration Station, the gateway for many of California's early Chinese immigrants, and South Carlsbad State Beach, a recreational park which won the 1966 Governor's Design Award Certificate of Excellence in the Landscape Category.9

Deering's tasks included property acquisition, planning and design, often requiring multi-jurisdictional collaboration involving recreation facilities, bike paths, trails, historic sites and natural areas. Beginning as Associate Landscape Architect at the Monterey Regional Office of Planning and Development, Deering learned early the value of bringing together stakeholders and representatives of private and public entities to engage in the park planning effort. This was exemplified in the Central Coast expansion of Big Sur State Park in 1960. Monterey County Planning...
After retiring from State Parks in 1980, Deering traveled to Saudi Arabia, where he taught Saudi architecture being selected for an exhibition at King Faisal University Museum. The Saudi government chose three of these for an exhibit on Saudi Arabia in Sweden. Deering continued working and lecturing, at times exhibit on Saudi Arabia in Sweden. Deering's widow, Alice Deering, provided much of Robert Deering's work and his work in such faraway places as India, Egypt, and Australia. Deering died at home December 1, 2010, during his afternoon nap, after a walk with a caregiver, which included identifying the plants along their route. Deering was 90 years old.

The author would like to extend her gratitude and thanks to Robert Deering's daughter, Roberta Deering, for her assistance with this article. Robert Deering's widow, Alice Deering, provided much of the primary source material and the photographic images for this article.

Melissa Moukas is a licensed landscape architect and architectural historian. She has spent much of her career studying the built environment in all its forms.

Projects included new land acquisitions along the Central Coast and, in the Southern California region, the Ventura County Coastal Recreation Plan. A project Deering found most challenging, but also most personally satisfying, was successfully negotiating the re-routing of California Highway 1, around, instead of through, Fort Ross State Historic Park, an early Russian outpost in northern California. Under Deering's direction, the Parks' Trail Planning, Acquisition and Development Unit prepared the first state-wide, integrated hiking, biking, and equestrian trail system plans and policies, where he ") crafted a plan and a policy which serves as a blueprint for work still in progress."

"FULL CIRCLE: A RETURN TO TEACHING"

After retiring from State Parks in 1980, Deering traveled to Saudi Arabia, where he taught for five years at King Faisal University in Dammam and served as landscape architect for the university's $1 million Passive Solar Cooling Project, and chaired the university's landscape development committee for the Dammam and Hofuf campuses. While there, he explored and photographed Saudi Arabia, resulting in fourteen of his photographs of indigenous Saudi architecture being selected for an exhibit at King Faisal University Museum. The Saudi government chose three of these for an exhibit on Saudi Arabia in Sweden. Deering continued working and lecturing, at times...

Endnotes
3. ibid.
11. Fox, "Nomination.
12. Dale Smith, "Historic and cultural landmarks of Dale Smith and Melissa Moukas, October 2015
13. Fox, "Nomination.

Commisioners, Parks staff (including Deering), State Parks Commissioners and private landowners together crafted a plan to expand Big Sur by 5,000 acres. Calmulating this effort was a helicopter tour and lunch for the decision-makers at Nathaniel Owings’ (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill) recently-completed cliff-side “Wild Bird” residence at Big Sur. Deering also was a key participant in the multi-disciplinary team for the design for the Monterey State Historic Monument and Custom House Plaza. Along with landscape architect Lawrence Halprin and architect Nathaniel Owings, the plan was a first attempt at integrating Parks-owned properties with private, city and urban renewal efforts. The design combined historic preservation of significant properties, historic spatial relationships, and plazas with recreational amenities, such as a pedestrian-based “Path of History.”

In the mid-1960s, Deering was appointed Senior Landscape Architect and Regional Supervisor at the Goleta regional office, near Santa Barbara. The Goleta regional office did much of the planning and design work for coastal parks from San Luis Obispo County to San Diego County, coordinating acquisitions and planning with the headquarters office in Sacramento. Parks headquarters generally managed the construction and bidding. According to Landscape Architect Dale Staffles, who also worked in the Goleta office, Parks had four design and planning satellite offices in the 1960s, located in Carmichael (Central Valley and Sierra Region projects); Sacramento (construction documents and special projects); Monterey (Northern California, Monterey County and north); and Goleta (Southern California, San Luis Obispo to Mexico, including the desert region). These satellite design offices were closed and consolidated to Sacramento in 1968-1969 under the Reagan administration. Doheny State Beach is a good example of the state beach design and mix of uses that Deering and his Goleta team incorporated into the coastal parks they designed. Intended for day use by the growing Southern California population, the park design featured a central concession area with seating, picnic areas for families or small groups, and, of course, beach access. The picnic and concession areas at Doheny State Beach are largely intact. In the intervening years, the original shade trees in the concession area have been changed out to palms and the seats of the picnic tables have been updated. Otherwise, the park retains a good deal of integrity from the era in which it was built.

After Parks’ regional planning offices were consolidated in Sacramento, Deering was appointed Project Manager for the Parks Planning, Acquisition and Development Unit...
Resources for the Uncovering at the Environmental Design Archive, UC Berkeley

BY PHOEBE CUTLER

Tucked discretely into one corner of the second floor of Wurster Hall, the 1960s concrete edifice that is the home of architecture, city planning, and landscape architecture at UC Berkeley, the Environmental Design Archives (EDA) is the principal resource for research in landscape history in the Bay Area. During Eden’s twenty-two-year span, the EDA’s resources have contributed to articles on Oakland’s founding park designer (and deported “spy”) Oskar Prager, 20s and 30s San Francisco practitioner Emerson Knight, and two outstanding members of the generation that followed him, Thomas Church and Garrett Eckbo. Currently, CGLHS Board member and author Libby Simon is doing research at the EDA on Eckbo’s Wonderland Park development in Los Angeles for an upcoming article for Eden.

Left to right: After apprenticing with more than one of the landscape luminaries of the Bay Area, Casey Kawamoto (1919–2010) opened his own successful practice that included the plans for Humboldt State and Robert Louis Stevenson School in Pebble Beach. His hundreds of residences included, as shown here, the Mill Valley residence for the philanthropist Bernard Osher; Eichler Highlands No.3: Garden Plan (Douglas and Maggie Baylis Collection); Sacramento City Plaza Park, (Robert N. Royston Collection). All images from the Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley.
Impressed, at the occasion of the dedication of UC Santa Barbara in 1925, by UC Berkeley President Gordon Sproul, Beatrix Farrand bequeathed her papers and her collection to the University of California at Berkeley. It is too much of an exaggeration to say that one early biography of Beatrix Farrand that mined those documents contributed to the revival of the formal European garden in this country.2 As British garden historians are all too conscious, the well-connected, New York Society landscape pioneer's papers include the plans and drawings of the celebrated English artist Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932). Jekyll's carefully drawn garden plans, with their applied theory of color harmonies and the softening effect of 'cottage'-style flower beds, have an international following. Her books, Wood and Garden (1890), Gardens for Small Country Houses and more, jointed with frequent articles in the journal Country Life, were widely consumed in this country, as well as abroad. Co-written with Lawrence Weaver, Country Houses was republished three times between 1912 and 1920. Nearly all of these appear in her own garden. Nearly all of these appear in her own garden. Nearly all of these appear in her own garden.

Endnotes
2. The publication by Patricia Beeman, Diane Kostial McGuire, and Elaine McFie, Architectural Heritage: Home Gardens and Campuses (Sagapress, New York, Sagapress, Inc., 1997), initiated the work on and by Beatrix Farrand. The work on the EDA was supported by the Landscape Architectural Foundation of California (LAF) through the James T. Ayres Fund (1999 New York. Fong, R. (1999) Helped to sustain it.)

Tour and Talk Showcases Two Important Pasadena Gardens

INTRODUCTION
Christy O'Hara, CGLHS President

Tour & Talk events are special opportunities that offer access to historic gardens with attendant expert lectures. In addition to education in a more formal setting, our members and guests have the unique opportunity to view these historic gardens in person. The winding streets and alleys of Pasadena, which are so lovely and historic, are perfect environments for a walking tour. These events are scheduled throughout the year, usually on Saturdays, in the spring and fall.

The Winifred Dobyns Garden

Ann Scheid

The recent discovery of the house and garden of Winifred Dobyns (1888-1962), author of the 1931 classic California Gardens, has brought to light not only a beautiful, nearly intact relic of Pasadena’s past, but also awakened interest in Dobyns herself. Myron Hunt noted in his 1928 book, California Gardens, that “the profession of landscape architecture is fortunately attracting an increasing number of highly-trained, much-travelled and experienced women.” Dobyns certainly must have conpired, for her book features many gardens designed by women. She organized the book to illustrate the various elements popular in California garden design: water features, axes and vistas, paths and paving, court-yards, entrances, fountains, trees in groves and in alées, pergolas, outdoor rooms, walls and hedges, gates, staircases, and service yard. Nearly all of these appear in her own garden.

Nearby twenty years directing the collection, Waverly Miller will be succeeded in July by her chief assistant Chris Martin.

The Mrs. Harry Gray Garden

Steven Keylon

After six months touring Europe in 1924, landscape architect Katherine Bashford returned full of inspiration. Writing about her impressions in California’s Southland, Bashford described some of what she saw: “The mansions of Troy are characterized by a stern, under- lying design which, while it unites the garden as a whole, also breaks up the area into separate parts. The main axis leads up or down, as the case may be, to other levels, and cross axes open up charming vistas throughout the garden. The garden is rarely seen as a whole.”1

For one of her first large-scale commissions upon her return from Europe, the garden for Mrs. Harry Gray was done in collaboration with architect Reginald O. Johnson. To complement the stately Italian Revival-style house, and inspired by what she experienced in Italy, Bashford made the large rear garden more intimate by creating an enclosure of high stucco walls with arched openings. These opened onto smaller garden rooms—one a cutting garden, the other a kitchen garden and service yard. These arched openings provide opportunities to see special gardens such as these, so seldom open to the public.
DEAR CGLHS MEMBERS,

After numerous years on the board, on January 1st I became the new president of CGLHS. As a professor of landscape architecture at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, education is my passion. Our activities focus in large part on promoting wider knowledge of Californian historic gardens and landscapes and our successes this past year speak to this core mission. Thanks to your support, the California Garden & Landscape History Society had another robust year of achievements in 2017. These include:

EDUCATION THROUGH EVENTS

The annual conference held in Palm Springs quickly sold out. Focused on the landscapes of the Spanish-Colonial Revival and mid-20th century modernist homes and resorts that made this desert destination known around the world, “Palm Springs: Playground of the Stars” included tours of both public and private gardens, with its cocktail reception and dinner at the Historic Palm Springs Tennis Club designed by Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones. Thank you to Steven Keylon as the conference convener for his excellent work. In addition to the conference, during 2017 CGLHS members had the opportunity to attend five educational lectures discussing the work of Ernest Batchelder, Kate Sessions, Ruth Shellhorn, Ralph Cornell and Francis Dean.

EDUCATION THROUGH PUBLICATION

This past year Eden had a substantial redesign with more color imagery and bolder graphics to help showcase the essays. We would like to thank guest editor Steven Keylon and the Eden Editorial Board as well as Bill Smith and Dave Shulman from DesignSimple who graciously worked pro bono on Eden's update. We would also like to thank the Palm Springs Historical Society which waived its substantial scanning and reproduction fees for the two Palm Springs issues of Eden.

CELEBRATION OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPES THROUGH OUR WEBSITE

Last year a major accomplishment was updating our website and converting much of our membership management to a new a software platform called Wild Apricot. Thank you to our board members David Laws, Brady Kuhl and Judy Hotten who spent a significant amount of time in this endeavor. If you have not yet had a chance, please visit www.cglhs.org, especially the Events page, where we continue to provide announcements of educational lectures, historic garden tours, and of course our annual conference. We are grateful for the many volunteers who run this organization, from the writers, speakers and those who host events to those who serve on our Board of Directors and Editorial Board. Thank you, too, to our members who continue to support CGLHS above the basic membership level which allows us to continue our collective mission.

—Christine O’Hara, President, CGLHS

CGLHS ANNUAL REPORT 2017
Front Cover: Wilson garden view of patio from living room. Royston partially enclosed the patio to make it a comfortable and useful space. Collection of the author.

Back cover: Wilson garden model. Typically, Eckbo Royston and Williams made models only for larger commercial or public commissions, but the complex design of the Wilson garden was best explained by a three-dimensional model. Collection of the author.