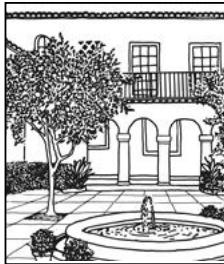


Eden

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Contents

Olmsted Brothers' Vision for the Panama-California Exposition

John Blocker

3

Capitol Towers: Sacramento's Modernist Gem

Flora Chou

8

Judy Horton, Garden Designer

Paula Panich

11

Kent Woodlands: An Interview with Nancy Kent Danielson

Harley Jessup

12

Nature and Nurture: California and the Kent Family

Daniel Gregory

14

Adaline Kent

Harley Jessup

15

CGLHS Annual Report

16

President's Message

18

On the Cover: *Distant view of lily pond at Balboa Park, Botanical Garden, Balboa Park, El Prado Area, San Diego, c. 1933. Photo by Marvin Rand, courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Above: *North front, looking south, House of Hospitality, Balboa Park. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Opposite: *West gate, Panama-California Exposition 1915. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*



Olmsted Brothers' Vision for the Panama-California Exposition

John Blocker

In a December 1910 editorial in *California Garden* magazine, Alfred D. Robinson, president of the San Diego Floral Association, praised the selection of America's most prominent landscape architects, the Olmsted Brothers, to design the grounds for the Panama-California Exposition.

The firm's preliminary plan for the exposition, which was to be held in Balboa Park in 1915, had been detailed in a *San Diego Union* article the preceding November 11. John C. Olmsted also outlined his firm's intentions to the members of the San Diego Floral Association at their monthly meeting in December. And in an article in the *San Diego Union*, he described his firm's plans:

I am disposed to recommend as the site for the style of gardening to be the severest Italian or Spanish style, and

not of the English style. The English go entirely too much on lawns. The old Italian and Spanish gardeners devoted their efforts more to walls and terraces, to flora of all kinds indigenous to their climate, with walks and steps & bridges & the effect, as a permanent feature of Balboa Park, will be far more pleasing, I believe, than if you sought the lawn effect.

Admiring San Diego's ocean panoramas from the coastal bluffs, Olmsted wrote that he "would not advise any elaborate scheme of lakes or lagoons, but only employ them to help out the general effect. You have too majestic a marine view from your windows." His idea for the hardscape was to "run a general scheme of arcades, much like those employed by the old mission architects, connecting building with

building by one of these picturesque walls and creating the mission court effect, where the exposition visitor might retreat for protection from the sun & rain & to rest."

Olmsted respected the natural topography and warned against intrusion. "These canyons should also preserve the sense of seclusion naturally sought for in a great city park by nature lovers, who visit such places to get away from the crowds and the signs & evidences of the city. If you were to boulevard the roads that run through these canyons, you would find the automobile driving away this sense of seclusion...."

Still, Robinson expressed concern about the planting of the park. "We do not criticize the appointment of those so well fitted to plan the general outline of the improvements, but the fact must not be lost sight of by the committee that Mr. Olmsted who





was here, knows nothing of the vegetation that will thrive here, or the great possibilities of our marvelous climate." He went on to suggest that the committee engage "someone who has lived here for years, and not only studied the plants now growing here, and also those that can be made to grow here." Although the Olmsteds did seek the counsel of local nursery people and horticulturists, and these experts were reportedly unselfish with their knowledge, only part of Robinson's advice was heeded.

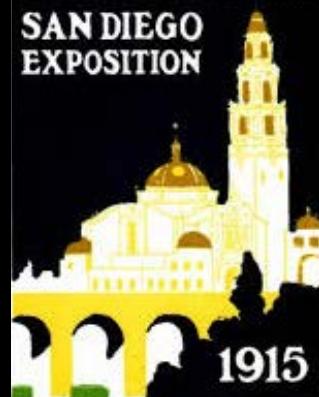
William Donald, who had been hired to run the nursery operation, had no local plant knowledge. However, he was an expert horticulturalist. The tall, ruddy-faced Scot had once managed the greenhouses of the R and J Farquhar Nursery Company in Mount Hope, Massachusetts, just a few miles from the Olmsted Brothers' headquarters in Brookline. In the

Farquhar greenhouses, Donald had grown begonias and palms, and propagated the Farquhar Rose, which became hugely popular upon its release for sale in 1903. From one plant he had propagated over 100,000 new roses in just two years.

To establish the Exposition's nursery, Olmsted encouraged residents to allow park gardeners to take cuttings from their home roses, vines, and other plants. San Diego's citizens brought cuttings to the newly established nursery in such quantity

Opposite: *Interior, vista in the gallery, Balboa Park, Botanical Garden, Balboa Park, c. 1933. Photo by Marvin Rand, courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Above: *East elevation, looking northwest, Balboa Park, House of Hospitality. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*



Designing the Visitor Experience

Two visions, one by the person in charge of designing the Exposition's buildings and the other in charge of landscaping, remain true to the vision Olmsted laid out in his *San Diego Union* article (November 1910).

In a book of essays entitled *Balboa Park and the 1915 Exposition*, the late Balboa Park historian Richard Amero credits Bertram Goodhue, chief architect for the 1915 Exposition, for the pleasing design of the landscape along the Prado:

The plan to use arcades to enhance continuity and dramatize progression...supplied a sense of comforting rhythm and helped to unify the composition. At the same time, they provided people with an experience of progression and discovery as they emerged from shadowed spaces into the sunlight of open plazas. Not to be underestimated were lateral glimpses of gardens and patios.

Director of Works Frank Allen Jr., who was also the director of the landscape installation, described the effects he hoped to create for the Exposition visitor in the 1915 issue of *Pacific Coast Architect*:

In leaving a building he may enter a formal flower garden ablaze with color. Leaving this by a walk with solid walls of living green, he comes into a park where he has a choice of several routes; he may enter an exhibit building or continue through the park, in which case he discovers new vistas of the buildings he has left, and unsuspected vistas through planting; and as he follows the path he may stop to rest in a rose-covered pergola in the cool shade of the old trees or in the warm sun on the south. ■



that workers were kept busy for several weeks planting and caring for the transfers. By February 23, 1911, over a million seedlings and cuttings flourished in the new nursery. In hothouses, tiny twigs of vines, flowers, and trees stood upright in wet sand, all looking very much alike. After gaining strength in the hothouse, plants were either brought to a lath house or transplanted into the field.

Acres of fields were plowed and planted with this nursery stock, which included grevilleas, geraniums, roses, pittosporum, oleanders, marguerites, jasmine, and English ivy. Maturing in masses were 3,000 holly-leaved cherry, 3,000 Catalina cherry, and 20,000 Australian tea trees, plants not available from commercial nurseries. Nearby, palms and cacti were cultivated.

In the nursery Donald nurtured the Matilija poppy, a California native with a flower that looks very much like a fried egg.

Although local experts said the plant could not be propagated, he placed rooted stems dug from the ground into sand layered over manure in a special glass case. Bottom heat as well as top heat helped the plants thrive.

Donald also germinated thousands of *Acacia melanoxylon*, or black acacia, by placing seeds in 100-degree water for three days before planting them in sand. Fast-growing black acacias would be one of the most prominent trees on the fair grounds. When the Exposition opened, these standard-shaped trees lined the Prado like lollipops.

In mid-1911, the Exposition committee decided to move the fair's central building complex from the flatlands and hillsides near the Russ School to the mesa above. The Olmsted brothers felt so strongly that the mesa should be left in its natural state that they resigned from the project. Donald resigned after the Olmsteds, but the nursery

he established would continue to supply plants needed to beautify the grounds. Director of Works Frank Allen agreed to take responsibility for the landscaping, and Paul Thiene, a member of Donald's crew, took charge of the nursery and the planting teams.

Although the natural scrubland on the mesa was lost, John C. Olmsted's ideas for the design of the buildings survived. His plan for "arcades connecting building with building, creating the mission court effect, walls and terraces, walks, steps and bridges and flora of all kinds appropriate to the climate" became the hallmark of the park. Residents and visitors can still enjoy the results of the Olmsted Brothers' vision today. ■

Editor's Note

The original version of this article was published in the November/December 2014 issue of *California Garden*, under the title "Planting the Park."



Endnote

Richard W. Amero, *Balboa Park and the 1915 Exposition*, Michael Kelly, ed. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013).

John Blocker, a long-time CGLHS member, served on the society's board from 1998 to 2008. He worked in the agricultural industry in San Diego for 31 years and is a frequent contributor to California Garden.

Above: West elevation, taken from Plaza de Panama - Balboa Park, House of Hospitality, San Diego. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

SAVE THE DATE!

2015 CGLHS CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO

October 2, 3, and 4, 2015



Join the centennial celebration of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition at our annual conference in San Diego's Balboa Park. Known as "the Garden Fair," the 1915 Exposition unleashed a century of influence over California architecture and landscapes.

The conference opens Friday evening with a reception at Marston House and Gardens, an important Arts & Crafts property. CGLHS is partnering with the venerable San Diego Floral Association (founded in 1907 and publisher of *California Garden* since 1909) in offering the Saturday lecture forum on October 3. The keynote speaker is Professor Robert Melnick, internationally recognized expert on cultural landscape evaluation and historic landscape preservation planning. Other speakers will cover the history of Balboa Park's landscaping and the Exposition's influence on design, planting, and regional identity.

CGLHS members will convene on Sunday morning for coffee and a tour of Balboa Park's iconic Botanical Building and additional tours of Balboa Park gardens. A very special private tour is still in the planning stage. Please stay tuned, but mark your calendars now.

Capitol Towers Sacramento's Modernist Gem

Flora Chou

Despite winning many awards, the 1965 Capitol Towers is today a little-known but excellent example of modernist urban housing. Intended to be an integral element of Sacramento's first realized urban redevelopment project, its all-star design team rejected the rows of identical towers associated with typical urban renewal projects of the day. Instead they placed emphasis on human-scaled urban living, mixing earlier Garden City principles of affordable, low-rise garden apartments in a parklike setting, while introducing a modern high rise for increased density and a public plaza at the heart. The resulting mix of both vertical and horizontal building elements, linked by landscaped spaces and a now-mature tree canopy, created a well-scaled, well-planned, and highly livable community.

An important work for all the architects involved, Capitol Towers is also a key work by master landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. It was among Halprin's earliest urban plazas and shows some early exploration of themes that became Halprin signatures in the years that followed: the collaborative design process, the way people move through public spaces, and most importantly, the civic plaza integrated with art and the built environment. Capitol Towers was Halprin's first exploration of this design trademark, which he would further develop at places like Ghirardelli Square and Embarcadero Plaza in San Francisco.

A proposed new development threatens to erase what has been a beloved and livable community for more than 50 years and a rare example of an urban garden apartment complex designed by a stellar group of the most talented designers of their time.

Urban Renewal

In the years following World War II, massive urban renewal projects sought to rehabilitate deteriorating city centers by replacing "blighted" downtowns with modern urban cores. By the time California had the tools in place for urban renewal in

the mid-1950s, a backlash was mounting against the "bleak towers" and "box-like buildings, no better than the slums they replaced," that defined redevelopment projects elsewhere.¹ In 1958, the same year New York developer James Scheuer was selected to develop Capitol Towers, he wrote:

We have now been warned that unless urban renewal is radically improved it will die aborning through lack of public support. The public will simply refuse to make the necessary capital investment, not only in terms of money but in terms of the inconvenience and dislocation which are unavoidable costs of redevelopment...there is no reason why redevelopment projects cannot be exciting and attractive. Why must all buildings in a project be identical?²

Capitol Towers was Scheuer's and his design team's response. Designed and constructed in phases between 1958 and 1965, Capitol Towers is a unique collaboration by some of the most distinguished and highly regarded modern designers of the period. Leading the team was Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, whose principals William Wurster, Theodore Bernardi, and Donn Emmons were instrumental in defining the look and feel of Bay Region Modernism. Joining them was the architectural team of Vernon DeMars and Donald Reay, fellow San Francisco architects also influential in the Bay Region Modernism movement. Rounding out the team was Edward Larabee Barnes, a New York-based architect and former Wurster employee who would go on to a distinguished design career.

Combining Garden City planning principles with Le Corbusier's "ideal city" high-rise planning from earlier in the twentieth century, Capitol Towers is a 10-acre superblock (equaling four city blocks) just south of Sacramento's Capitol Mall. The 409 rental units are housed in eight two- or three-story garden apartment buildings and one 15-story tower. Automobiles are confined to the perimeter parking courts and a parking structure. The pedestrian-only interior extends from the existing

street grid along walkways that divide the site into four quadrants. At the core of the site, the walkways intersect to open into a central plaza at the heart of the community. A striking sculptural wall by artist Jacques Overhoff anchors the plaza and divides it from the complex's swimming pool. Toward the center is the tower, which houses restaurants and retail at its ground floor.³

The design of the low-rise garden apartments was kept deliberately simple, as is typical for Bay Region Modernism. Staggered unit modules, deep overhangs, and open breezeways varied the design. Between the buildings, courtyards and landscaped courts were shared by the community. Balancing the public open spaces, each apartment has a private outdoor space in either an upper floor balcony or an enclosed ground floor patio. The balconies of the garden buildings typically overlook the shared lawns, while the enclosed patios are at the opposite side of the buildings to maximize privacy. Each tower unit also has a balcony.

Halprin's Landscape Plan

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was one of the most prolific American landscape architects of the postwar years. His work exhibits an attention to human scale, user experience, and social impact. Capitol Towers came about during a transitional period from private residential, shopping mall, and college campus commissions to the larger-scale public and urban projects for which he is best known. As he later recalled, the Capitol Towers project shows Halprin exploring early iterations of

Opposite top: Central plaza with sculptural wall and swimming pool on the other side.

Opposite bottom: Main walkway and landscape into Capitol Towers flanked by staggered garden apartment buildings and on axis with the central plaza and sculptural wall in the background.

Images courtesy Page & Turnbull, 2014.



themes that would later become his design signatures:

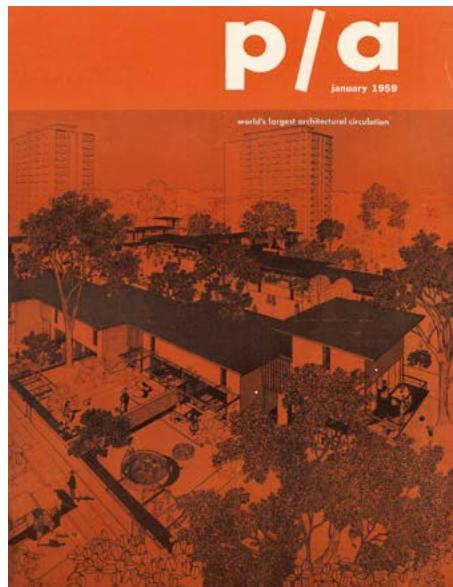
I was now working closely with some world-class architects and ... getting a great deal of experience. I designed my first urban plaza at the center of the Sacramento project [Capitol Towers], and brought in the sculptor Jacques Overhoff to work on an enclosing cast concrete wall. I was developing street details for these larger commissions and I was learning about graphics from the great graphic designer Saul Bass.⁴

Although budget constraints simplified Halprin's initial plans, landscaping was a defining element of the site planning for Capitol Towers. The low-rise buildings with shared lawns front the main walkways as if along a street. They also enclose more intimate courtyards in less trafficked areas, and their backs are around the service and parking courts. Landscaped courts with grids of trees or low plantings are found at each parking court and at the tower base, marking the transition into the site's pedestrian interior. Some existing site trees were saved and incorporated, and the design team fought to save street trees from proposed street widening by the city.⁵

While Capitol Towers engages the city beyond its site, the central feature is the internal plaza at the core. With a grid of London plane trees and a low circular fountain at the southeast corner, the plaza is a quiet gathering place enlivened by Overhoff's robust sculptural wall. In his 1963 book *Cities*, Halprin uses the plaza of Capitol Towers to illustrate his text on minor plazas, which encapsulates how he viewed plazas:

At the confluence of streets there are often small spaces which should be developed as handsome and colorful incidents in the heart of the city. A small plaza can contain, in a relatively casual way, sculpture, fountain, art exhibits, cafes, and benches which are human in scale, intimate, and usable. A local plaza gives a sense of place and becomes a focus for its neighborhood. It can be a rallying place for neighborhood activities and establish a quality and character for its inhabitants.⁶

Capitol Towers appears frequently throughout *Cities* as Halprin examines the elements that constitute successful urban spaces. In addition to the minor plaza, Capitol Towers' walkways are an example of a pedestrian mall, Overhoff's "great frieze, cast in concrete ... and tilted into place" illustrates when more solid barrier walls are needed to screen noise and views between busy public spaces and recreation areas, and a detailed notational system of walking through Capitol Towers is included to demonstrate Halprin's process for examining "the kinesthetic experience."⁷ He later



expanded his notation system as part of his RSVP Cycle and his constant fascination with movement through space. The street furniture Halprin designed for Capitol Towers—a globe light standard, wood-slat benches, a kiosk, among others—also make appearances in *Cities*.

The design of Capitol Towers was recognized early on with awards from *Progressive Architecture*, the Northern California Chapter of the AIA, and the Governor's Design Awards Program.⁸ Some changes have occurred over the last 50 years, including the loss of Halprin's light standard and the kiosk, but overall, Capitol Tower's primary spatial relationships, residential buildings, and key landscape features remain intact.

Under Threat

As with other garden apartment complexes, the abundance of open space and the relatively low scale that make Capitol Towers such a unique, livable place also make it vulnerable to calls for higher density. In December 2013, current owners Kennedy Wilson proposed to demolish all the low-rise buildings and much of the landscape in order to build over 1,200 new units and a hotel. The new buildings range from eight-story mid-rises to several buildings over 20 stories tall. More than 1,700 parking spaces would be in two large parking structures in the center of the site. Capitol Towers' original tower, axial walkways, and the central plaza would remain but would become unrecognizable.

A local preservation organization, Sacramento Modern, has been leading the advocacy effort to save Capitol Towers, and has been joined by the City of Sacramento

Preservation Commission and the State Historic Resources Commission, which voted in November to recommend Capitol Towers for the National Register of Historic Places. However, this does not prevent demolition, and the city's political leadership has not committed to saving Capitol Towers. The Draft Environmental Impact Report, expected early in 2015, will consider Capitol Towers a historic resource and should include preservation alternatives. ■

Endnotes

1. James H. Scheuer, "Letters to the Times: To Beautify Housing," *New York Times*, July 8, 1958. For more on the delayed urban redevelopment in California and in Sacramento, see Daniel S. Maroon, "Redevelopment in the Golden State: A Study in Plenary Power under the California Constitution," *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly*, Vol. 40:2, Winter 2013, 453-474 and Richard Trainor, *Floor, Fire and Blight: A History of Redevelopment in Sacramento*, (Sacramento: Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency, 1991).

2. Scheuer, "Letters to the Times."

3. Two additional towers at the superblock's corners are located where towers were planned, but they were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s by different developers and design teams, and are not part of Capitol Towers.

4. Lawrence Halprin, *A Life Spent Changing Places* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 108.

5. Newspaper articles and correspondences from 1958 in Sacramento Redevelopment Correspondence folder (014.I.A.6000) from Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

6. Lawrence Halprin, *Cities*, Revised edition, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), 27.

7. Halprin, *Cities*, 21, 131, and 212-213.

8. Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, *Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Inc., Architects* (San Francisco, CA: Wuster, Bernardi and Emmons, Inc., 1967), 30.

Flora Chou is a cultural resources planner at Page & Turnbull's Los Angeles office. Prior to joining Page & Turnbull, she was a preservation advocate for the Los Angeles Conservancy, helping to implement the organization's advocacy efforts to protect historic resources. Flora holds a master's degree in historic preservation from Columbia University and is a LEED-accredited professional. Since 2012, she has served on the national board of Docomomo US, a national nonprofit organization that advocates for the buildings and sites of the modern movement.

Above: Capitol Towers and Gardens featured on the cover of Progressive Architecture, January 1959.

Judy Horton, Garden Designer

Paula Panich

Most of you know Judy Horton as a CGLHS board member (and two-term president) and as a lover of California gardens and cultural landscapes. But you don't know her as I do. For I have a home—at least this is the way I experience my garden—in Judy Horton's mind.

In December 2010, Judy began designing our garden in Larchmont Village, close to the center of Los Angeles. Three small 1921 buildings shoehorned into a 5,000-square-foot lot, surrounded by concrete, crumbling driveway, white picket fence, lawns. OUT, she said about this "landscaping." Demolition, then rethinking, restructuring, replanting.

The result? Last night was the November full moon. Light fell into the garden as silver snow. At midnight, I stepped out onto the tiny deck to see the blooming shadow of a plum tree.

Talk about the poetics of space: an invisible ribbon, threading through kitchen, yard, writing cottage, and printmaking studio. People speak of "reading" a garden. What does that mean?

Isamu Noguchi writes: "We are a landscape of all we have seen." And what has Judy seen? Gardens around the world. Delicate plants she will never forget. (She was once a librarian; plants are classified in her mind's eye by texture, color, size, habit, place of origin, botanical family, the way they flirt with sun and moon.)

And what has Judy read to feed that mind of hers? Everything. Mention an English-language book, she will know it, and of course any about gardens—practical, philosophical, personal, historical.

But the garden, this transformed space around our house, is, as she will tell you, mine. She sees the landscapes in my mind, and in the way of all great artists, she intuits and absorbs. It's mine because she has interpreted what I was able to express about what I love. A collaboration, in this sense. But I know I could have stared at these spaces around me for a century without coming up with a sliver of her brilliant ideas.

This brings me to stone. Stone is the organizing principle of this garden. Why? Odd small spaces demand something or other, don't they? Judy knows I love the temple gardens of Kyoto. A few weeks ago I was at the doorway of the cottage, staring out, and I finally saw it: the silvery river, fluid, flowing through the garden and my heart. ■



Above: The storytelling pathway in the Los Angeles garden designed by Judy Horton for Paula Panich and Bill Linsman. Among the stones are those collected by the couple and their daughter over the years, along with those sent by friends around the country. Photo by Paula Panich.

Kent Woodlands: An Interview with Nancy Kent Danielson

Harley Jessup

I talked with Nancy Kent Danielson in the living room of her home on Laurel Way. Granddaughter of philanthropist and conservationist William Kent, Nancy has grown up in the town named after her great grandfather Albert Kent. She has seen the area develop from the original Kent estate of the 1930s to the Kent Woodlands of today.

Harley Jessup: What was the original vision of Kent Woodlands?

Nancy Kent Danielson: There was a dedication to sharing, preserving and maintaining the natural beauty of the valley, guiding new owners to put the smallest footprint on the land as was visually and physically possible.

Was the Kent family of two minds about developing the land?

Yes, I think so. Mrs. Albert Kent's idea of "I've found paradise" was passed down and if you've found paradise, you want to keep paradise the way it is. And certainly subdividing, the way we'd begun to learn in the '30s, was a dangerous thing. How to do it with the least disruption of the nature? That's why they went to all the effort of putting limits on size. If it were in a tight canyon, the lot size would be smaller. And they would try to place the driveways in ways that would avoid big cuts.

Who played the biggest role in shaping Kent Woodlands?

Everybody wanted to do it right. My uncle, William Kent Jr., who was the third-oldest living offspring of William and Elizabeth Kent, took on the job of subdividing it, consulting with his brothers and sisters.

How did Kent Woodlands develop over the years?

Kent Woodlands started slowly with the first subdivision on the flat, and then individuals who heard about it immediately wanted to buy certain lots. That stimulated the next subdivision. The property around where Mrs. William Kent, our grandmother, lived (now 131 Goodhill) was not to be sold. Goodhill went up to her house and stopped. Woodland went as far as South and North Ridgewood. The big gray house on the southeast corner was built by the Galbraeths. Fred Galbraeth wanted horses and a little stable. That subdivision was fairly slow starting. Then Albert Barrows wanted to build high up on Rancheria. Depending on who wanted to buy where, and according to how many people wanted to buy, they extended the roads. They planned the layout as they went, according to the lay of the land. The surveyor was a friend who had been around for many years. They trusted him, and I think he did a good job, creating the lots so that people would not cut into the hills unnecessarily, keeping the slopes as untouched as possible.

How were the streets named?

The earliest street names came from the previous use of the land. Goodhill was the hill for hikes with the "short-legged hikers" (children). Spring Road was the location of the original water system. Vineyard Way went through the old vineyards and Orchard Way went through the apple and pear orchards.

What are some of the oldest homes in Kent Woodlands?

The oldest house is at 7 Orchard Way, the Richardson house. Albert and Adaline Kent lived there, until 200 Woodland was completed in 1872. Other early homes were the converted barn at

8 Laurel Way, "The Overflow" guesthouse at 12 Laurel Way, and "New Haven" at 131 Goodhill, built in 1937.

In the early years Kent Woodlands was a showcase for outstanding mid-century architecture. Did the Kent family have ties to the Bay Area architectural community?

Yes, we feel fortunate that Larry Halprin, Joe Esherick, Becky Wood, Mario Ciampi, Henry Howard, William Wurster, and Tommy Church all did beautiful work in Kent Woodlands. Addie Kent Howard and her husband, Robert, were both sculptors and painters. Robert's father was architect, John Galen Howard, who designed many buildings at UC Berkeley. In those days we had a feeling that architects were artists. I grew up with that idea, because of Bob and Addie and all their friends.

What are your earliest memories of this area?

The Kents from San Francisco and Marin County gathered at our grandmother's every Sunday. After noonday dinner, we'd all go for a walk, which would follow pretty much where Woodland Road is now. We'd go up the hills crossing streams and little springs. We knew the area very well, even the bobcats we occasionally saw.

What about Kent Woodlands today? What is the future challenge?

I think the greatest thing that our grandfather had was vision. It's a rare quality.

Kent Woodlands has been ecologically sound, and in the future our challenge is to maintain that. Will future construction fit the terrain? Will we save the unique beauty that is here? Many build out-of-context with the area. There aren't many areas like this, and fewer and fewer people who have grown up where they walked in the woods. Have we lost our connection to the earth? There is talk about what our next-door neighbor thinks. My view is that Kent Woodlands is a U-shaped valley; someone clear across the valley is your neighbor. They're the ones who are going to see your house and lights and hear your sounds probably more than your close neighbors. In the early decades of Kent Woodlands, importance was placed on size, shape, color, and how the house was situated on the lot. We need to return to these precepts.

How would you like to imagine Kent Woodlands twenty years from now?

I'd like to see the people and privacy and unique beauty all exist. I think it's possible to come to a balance, which is far from where we are now. We're overboard, but I think that the pendulum will swing. We cannot continue overusing the land, overbuilding the sites and diminishing nature. ■

Opposite clockwise from top: Sketch of home from Kentwood Woodlands brochure; William Kent, courtesy U.S. House of Representatives Collection; Elizabeth Thacher Kent, c. 1916, photographer unknown; brochure promoting Kentwood Estates, c. 1940s.



K E N T W O O D L A N D S
M A R I N C O U N T Y
L O U H . R O S E C O . , *O p e r a t i n g A g e n t s*

Nature and Nurture: California and the Kent Family

Daniel Gregory

Addie Kent and Bob Howard were among the state's most prominent early environmental artists. The natural landscape was both backdrop and source material for them. Not only did the Kent family give Muir Woods to the state, but they also attempted to do the same with their mile-long crescent at Stinson Beach—they were turned down and ultimately subdivided it into the community known as Seadrift.

Camping at Tahoe was a favorite recreation, and high country rock and river formations even provided inspiration for Addie's more abstract designs, like the pool island for the Donnells. Forests and marine life captured Bob's interest—he created a mermaid for Della Walker at her Frank Lloyd Wright-designed beach house at Carmel, and later concentrated on building delightfully sculpted trails along the creek at his sister Janette Wallace's house in the Santa Cruz Mountains. That house was designed by his brother Henry, one of the architects of San Francisco's Coit Tower. Their father was UC Berkeley campus architect John Galen Howard, who designed the Campanile and Memorial Stadium, among many buildings.

Addie and Bob often spent time with a close circle of friends and family in the Santa Cruz Mountains at the Gregory Farmhouse designed by William Wurster, which was adjacent to Janette's property. The group included Wurster and his wife, urban planner and housing expert Catherine Bauer, co-founders of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, and landscape architect Thomas Church and his wife Betsy, who first brought Aalto furniture to California in the late 1930s. How "natural" then, that Kent and Howard work would appear in many Wurster houses and Church gardens! ■

Dan Gregory grew up among farmhouses designed between 1928 and 1963 outside Santa Cruz by William Wurster for his relatives, an experience that shaped his subsequent career as an architectural historian and *Sunset magazine's* senior home editor. Thomas and Betsy Church were neighbors, and Dan's first job was working one summer as an office boy for Tommy Church at his firm in San Francisco. Currently, Dan is editor-in-chief of Houseplans.com. He is the author of Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House (Rizzoli 2008), and his latest book is From The Land: The Architecture of Backen, Gillam, & Kroeger (Rizzoli 2013).

Right top: Kent Family in Muir Woods. ©Anne T. Kent.

Right bottom: Letters between President Theodore Roosevelt and William Kent regarding the gift of Muir Woods to the Nation. Courtesy Harley Jessup.



CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT



The White House
Washington

January 22, 1908

My dear Mr. Kent:

I have just received from Secretary Garfield your very generous letter enclosing the gift of Redwood Canyon to the National Government to be kept as a perpetual park for the preservation of the giant redwoods therein and to be named the Muir National Monument. You have doubtless seen my proclamation of January 9th, instant, creating this monument. I thank you most heartily for this singularly generous and public spirited action on your part. All Americans who prize the natural beauties of the country and wish to see them preserved undamaged, and especially those who realize the literally unique value of the groves of giant trees, must feel that you have conferred a great and lasting benefit upon the whole country.

I have a very great admiration for John Muir; but after all, my dear sir, this is your gift. No other land than that which you give is included in this tract of nearly 300 acres and I should greatly like to name the monument the Kent Monument if you will permit it.

Sincerely yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

Kentfield, California
January 30, 1908

To the President,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Roosevelt:

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your message of appreciation, and hope and believe it will strengthen me to go on in an attempt to save more of the precious and vanishing glories of nature for a people too slow of perception.

Your kind suggestion of a change of name is not one that I can accept. So many millions of better people have died forgotten, that to stencil one's own name on a benefaction, seems to carry with it an implication of mundane immortality, as being something purchasable.

I have five good, husky boys that I am trying to bring up to a knowledge of democracy and to a realizing sense of the rights of the "other fellow", doctrines which you, sir, have taught with more vigor and effect than any man in my time. If these boys cannot keep the name of Kent alive, I am willing it should be forgotten.

I have this day sent you by mail a few photographs of Muir Woods, and trust that you will believe, before you see the real thing (which I hope will be soon) that our Nation has acquired something worth while.

Your truly,

William Kent





Adaline Kent

Harley Jessup

Daughter of conservationist William Kent, Adaline Kent and her circle of architect friends helped set the direction of mid-century Kent Woodlands. A gifted sculptor, she and her husband Robert Howard, the son of architect John Galen Howard, were at the center of the Bay Area art scene of the 1930s and 1940s.

Their friends William Wurster, Joe Esherick, Rebecca Wood, Henry Howard, Mario Ciampi, Geraldine Scott, and George Rockrise all created beautiful homes in Kent Woodlands in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1948 Kent collaborated with landscape architects Thomas Church and Lawrence Halprin on a sculptural island for the pool at "El Novillero," the Donnell Ranch in Sonoma, California.

Kent was born at the Kent home (now 200 Woodland Road) in 1900. She earned a B.A. from Vassar College in 1923 and then went on to study sculpture with Ralph Stackpole at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco and later with Antoine Bourdelle in Paris. Upon her return to the Bay Area in 1930, Kent married Howard. The couple set up a shared studio (the building, identified by a Roman-style relief on its exterior, is on Francisco

Street in San Francisco) and began work separately on major commissions. Kent created several large figures for the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair, later establishing a reputation for innovation and an abstract style rooted in surrealism.

Kent died in an automobile accident in 1957. Her will established a scholarship in her name at the San Francisco Art Institute. Her work has been exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and is in the collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The book *The Autobiography from the Notebooks and Sculpture of Adaline Kent* was published as a memorial in 1958.¹ ■

Endnotes

1. Reissued as a paperback by Literary Licensing, LLC, in 2011.

Harley Jessup is a production designer at Pixar Animation Studios. He and his family have been residents of Kent Woodlands since 1991.

Above: Adaline Kent in her studio, c. 1940s, in *Autobiography: From the Notebooks and Sculpture of Adaline Kent*, January 1, 1958.

CALIFORNIA GARDEN & LANDSCAPE HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2014

In early March, the CGLHS Board agreed on a vision to guide our organization during the next two to three years.

We want to continue to expand our community by sharing as well as adding to the knowledge and understanding of the rich, diverse history of gardens and landscapes in California.

We also want to promote wider awareness of landscape and garden renovation and preservation.

We will accomplish our goals through the articles in our quarterly journal, *Eden*; through the now-searchable back issues of *Eden* on our website; our in-depth annual conferences; a newly revived program of Tours and Talks to take place throughout the state; and, finally, through the use of social media to discuss our concerns as well as promote our events.



Among the accomplishments of 2014:

- *Eden* published substantive articles on topics as varied as Golden Gate Park's first woman gardener, Sydney Stein Rich; the challenges to Los Angeles' Elysian Park and the landscaping of Dodger Stadium; and landscape architects Lockwood de Forest Jr. and Ralph Cornell.
 - Our newly designed website (with all back issues of *Eden*) was launched in July.
 - The 2014 CGLHS conference in Santa Barbara, "Landscape Legacy of Lockwood de Forest," featured lively, erudite speakers and fabulous garden tours. Attendees also discovered remnants of de Forest's public work in downtown Santa Barbara.
 - In November, CGLHS was a co-sponsor of "The Public Landscapes of Ralph Cornell," produced by The Cultural Landscape Foundation as part of its "What's Out There Weekend" series.
- We end the year with a big thank you to retiring board members Phoebe Cutler and Christy O'Hara.



Row 3 left (top to bottom): Christy O'Hara; Phoebe Cutler, photo by Kelly Comras.



Row 3 right: Ralph D. Cornell exhibition at UCLA Special Collections, organized as part of the CGLHS co-sponsorship of the What's Out There Weekend with The Cultural Landscape Foundation, photo by Steven Keylon; Sydney Stein Rich on the cover of the Winter 2014 issue of *Eden*.



Eden
Journal of the California Garden & Landscape History Society
Winter 2014 • Vol. 17 No. 1



WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL OUR MEMBERS, DONORS, EDEN CONTRIBUTORS, AND VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE HELPED ENSURE THAT CGLHS WILL CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE THE BEAUTY AND DIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA'S HISTORIC GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES FOR MANY MORE YEARS.

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Libby Simon

Jennifer Trotoux

Legend:

* = Founding Member

** = Board of Directors

*** = Eden Editorial Board

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear CGLHS Members,

I am thrilled to be writing this note to you as your new president and as a member of an outstanding new board of directors. Our organization has “grown up” during the last four years under Judy Horton’s devoted leadership. We have introduced a new Web presence, professionalized staff and membership functions, and launched a sleek new Eden that gives us the best of a wide range of well-researched and well-written articles on California’s garden and landscape history.

We have also just celebrated our twentieth year as an organization with one of our most well-attended conferences ever. In October, 60 people revisited one of our favorite conference sites, Santa Barbara, for a weekend devoted to lectures and visits to gardens associated with the legacy of landscape architect Lockwood de Forest Jr. The weekend began with a kickoff party on Friday night, hosted by Frank Goss in the beautiful Sullivan Goss gallery and starlit patio garden. CGLHS members were treated to a special presentation of paintings by Lockwood de Forest Sr.

It is fitting that our keynote speaker was one of our earliest and most ardent supporters, David Streatfield, professor emeritus at the University of Washington. David was honored at the Saturday dinner for speakers and hosts at The Little Town Club, which was partially underwritten by Virginia Gardner. The lineup of speakers also included Susan Chamberlin, Sydney Baumgartner, and Douglas and Regula Campbell. On Sunday, we boarded small buses and visited six gardens, concluding the day with a final celebration at Coyote House, the hilltop home of landscape architect Susan van Atta and her husband, architect Ken Radtkey.

We renewed old friendships and also made some new friends during the weekend, ones who expressed their enthusiasm by joining CGLHS. Now that Judy Horton has established a modern business structure for CGLHS, it is my goal to expand our Tours & Talks and build up our membership.

Will you help me? I look forward to meeting each and every one of you!

Best regards,

Kelly Comras

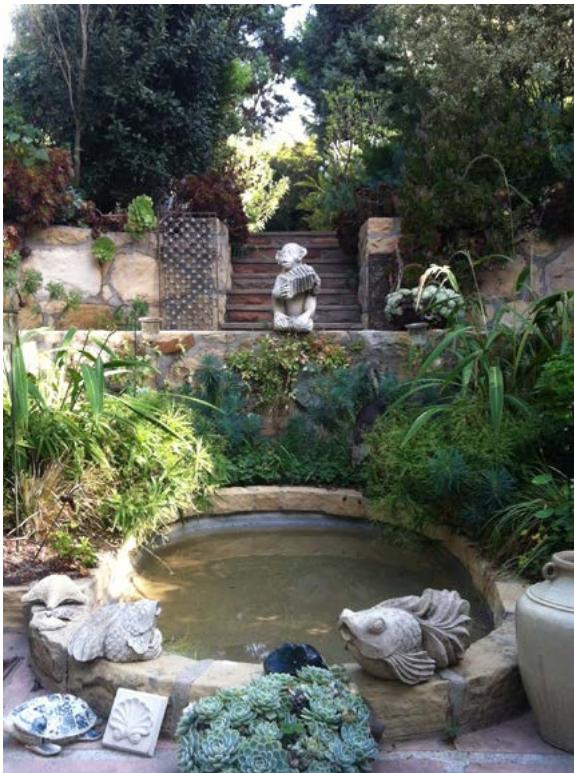
Kelly Comras, CGLHS President



Above clockwise from top: Painting of border in Lockwood de Forest's garden by Meredith Brooks Abbott, courtesy Sydney Baumgartner; steps under construction in the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in 1950, courtesy Santa Barbara Botanic Garden; Kelly Comras (left) and Judy Horton, photo by Steven Keylon; Kellam de Forest with daughters Ann (left) and Elizabeth, photo by Kelly Comras.

Opposite clockwise from top: Sydney Baumgartner's Santa Barbara garden, photo by Carolyn Bennet; David Streatfield, the keynote speaker at the Santa Barbara conference, photo by Kelly Comras; pond in Isabelle Greene's Santa Barbara garden, photo by Claire Takacs, courtesy Isabelle Greene; meadow at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, courtesy Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

New 2015 Board Members



When the new CGLHS board assumes office in January 2015, it will include some new faces. Elections were conducted at the annual business meeting, held in connection with the October conference in Santa Barbara. The Nominating Committee was Nancy Carol Carter (Chair), Judy Horton, and Ann Scheid.

Serving CGLHS for the first time:

Cecily Harris: Currently sitting on the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors, San Francisco Bay Trail Board of Directors, and the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Advisory Committee, Cecily previously served as Managing Director of Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Executive Director of San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society, Landscape Architecture Specialist for City of San Mateo Parks, Financial Services Manager for San Mateo County Parks, and Executive Director for Coastside State Parks Association. She holds a B.S. in Renewable Natural Resources, Wildlife Sciences, from the University of Arizona and an M.B.A. from Golden Gate University.

Brandy Kuhl: The Head Librarian at the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, Brandy joined the staff in 2007 and has held her current position since August 2010. She manages a 27,000-volume reference library devoted to the subject of horticulture and is responsible for maintaining, developing, and conserving the most comprehensive subject collection in Northern California and providing reader and reference services to about 10,000 patrons each year. Brandy is active in the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries and is a participating member in the Special Libraries Association. Brandy served on the American Horticultural Society Book Award Committee from 2011 to 2013. She holds a B.A. in humanities from San Francisco State University and an M.L.I.S. from San Jose State University.

Daniel Neri: A landscape designer and project specialist at the University of Southern California's department of Facilities Management Services, Daniel currently serves as the HALS (Historic American Landscape Survey) Liaison for the Southern California Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. He has past professional experience in marketing, fund-raising, communications, and event planning. Neri earned a B.A. in the History of Art from Yale University and an M.A. in Landscape Architecture as well as a Certificate in Historic Preservation from USC.

Returning to the Board after earlier terms:

Libby Simon: Former animation artist and producer, Libby is now involved in the world of landscape design, garden antiques, and historic preservation. She served previously on the Board of CGLHS and has been involved in historic preservation with the completion of Historic American Landscape Surveys of the San Gabriel Mission, the Los Angeles Ebell garden by Florence Yoch and Lucile Council, and the Old Zoo at Griffith Park. A recent graduate of UCLA Extension's Landscape Architecture program, she is now designing residential gardens..

The complete Board Roster for 2015:

President: **Kelly Comras**

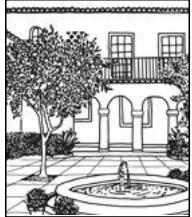
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Membership Secretary: **Daniel Neri**

Recording Secretary: **Ann Scheid**

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California Garden & Landscape History Society

www.cglhs.org

CGLHS
PO Box 31130, Los Angeles, CA 90031

Address Correction and Forwarding Requested



Sunlight shining through redwood trees at the Muir Woods National Monument in Marin County, California. William and Elizabeth Kent gave Muir Woods to the Nation in 1908.