



McAlmon House - Page 5

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***Obscured view.*

How House - Page 6

Sachs Apartments / Manola Court - Page 8

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SCHINDLER'S MULTI-FAMILY SILVER LAKE



TRAILBLAZER ANDREW ROMANO

ABOUT ANDREW

As a national correspondent for *Yahoo News*, Romano reports on national affairs from Los Angeles; he previously covered three presidential campaigns and authored numerous cover stories as a senior writer for *Newsweek*. In his spare time, Romano geeks out over architecture and design on Instagram (@andrew__romano) and contributes related stories to *Monocle*, *Apartamento* and *The New York Times's T Magazine*. In 2018, Romano published a small book about his house (*The Walker House, RM Schindler*) with *Apartamento*.

BLAZING THE TRAIL

In conjunction with a parallel Richard Neutra trail — and with the centennial of Schindler's own Kings Road house, his most famous multi-family dwelling — this trail will show architecture fans how LA's most innovative and idiosyncratic modernist thought outside the city's single-family box, from a residence designed for three co-habiting women to a house with temporary quarters for the homeless to a small, sloped lot apartment building that somehow managed to squeeze three graceful units with outdoor space beneath the owner's penthouse. Schindler was solving problems then that still plague LA today. Perhaps seeing his solutions in real life will help inspire some new creativity.

I'm the owner of Schindler's Walker House (1936). I've written for *Apartamento*, *Monocle* and others about Schindler and early LA modernism. I live in Silver Lake with my wife and kids and know its architecture (and architecture community) well.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ANDREW

Andrew's Instagram



THE TRAIL



CAUTION

TRAIL RULES

DON'T BE A TRAIL TRASHER!:

Take only pictures *of the outside!* And leave only footprints *on public sidewalks!*

DON'T BOTHER THE RESIDENTS!:

Do not approach owners! Do not ask them to look inside!
Doing so will cause harm to you, them and us!

NO GUARANTEES:

FORT: LA does not guarantee unobstructed views of these locations. We believe that, in many ways, the journey is the destination, and that being in the neighborhood can provide its own pleasures.

YOUR OWN RISK:

You assume all risk for taking this Trail.



DESTINATION 1 VAN PATTEN HOUSE

R.M. Schindler
1934

ORIGINAL CLIENT Elizabeth Van Patten

ADDRESS 2320 Moreno Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90039

WHY ON THE TRAIL? A fascinating experiment in cohabitation with a plan that originally provided individual living arrangements for three single women under one roof, and an exterior form that expresses this interior condition. The women shared common living and kitchen spaces but had their own sleeping chambers — a twist on Kings Road. The square house frankly expressed how Schindler oriented one façade to a distant mountain view, the other façade to a view of Silver Lake. Each view was geared to a specific occupant's bedroom.

BEST VIEWING Very difficult to see. Best to just glance over the fence for a peek at the three garages, now converted to additional living space. Not visible from Kenilworth below because of large trees.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS Might want to drive by Schindler's Bubeshko Apartments on the way up to Moreno: 2036-2046 Griffith Park Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90039

MORE INFO *AD&A Museum, UC Santa Barbara*

"COME ALIVE" IDEA The first Schindler house with Unit Furniture — a modular concept based on an ottoman unit that could be adapted into various chair and sofa combinations by adding different back and armrests and sliding together. Maybe something there? Especially interesting to think about modularity in a shared space.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 10

DESTINATION 2
**THE MCALMON
HOUSE**

R.M. Schindler
1935-36

ORIGINAL CLIENT Victoria McAlmon

ADDRESS 2717-2721 Waverly Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90039

WHY ON THE TRAIL? Yet another variation on the multi-family theme: an existing bungalow that Schindler moved to the front of the lot and wrapped in his sculptural forms to create a guesthouse; a new house for the owner sited at the top of the slope to maximize the views. Almost a reverse ADU situation.

BEST VIEWING Clearly visible from Waverly.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS If tourgoers want lunch, this would be a good time. Hot Tongue (vegan) pizza, Burgers Never Say Die and Salazar (Mexican) are all nearby. Blair's for dinner. Brooke Street for coffee.

MORE INFO *Department of City Planning*

Steve Wallet

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY
CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 18**

DESTINATION 3 HOW HOUSE

R.M. Schindler
1925

ORIGINAL CLIENT James Eads How

ADDRESS 2422 Silver Ridge Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90039

WHY ON THE TRAIL? One of Schindler's early masterpieces (and his first in Silver Lake), the How House is notable not only for its ingenious interplay of glass, redwood and concrete but for its unusual plan and social mission.

"The original owner, James Eads How — a millionaire who donated most of his wealth to the hobo community — commissioned the building to serve as both a family home and a dormitory for the hobos that wandered up from the railroad tracks below. A separate entrance allowed access to the bottom floor where the homeless could wash, sleep and eat before hopping a train to the next city." —Chelsea Faulker, *Passion, Artistry & Intrigue: The Captivating World of L.A. Architecture*.

BEST VIEWING From Silver Ridge.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS There are numerous notable houses on Silver Ridge, including some by Gregory Ain, Harwell Harris (the Hawk House directly across the street), JR Davidson and A.E. Morris.

MORE INFO *Michael LaFetra*

How House: Rm Schindler (Historical Building Monographs Series)

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 32

DESTINATION 4
FALK
APARTMENTS R.M. Schindler
1949

ORIGINAL CLIENT S. T. Falk and Pauline Falk

ADDRESS 3631 Carnation Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90026

WHY ON THE TRAIL? One of Schindler's most complex hillside designs, with each of the building's four apartments having a unique relationship to its corner site. Each apartment twists and turns on the hillside for maximum privacy, with unobstructed city views from the roof terraces. Came right after the last Sachs additions, and is nearly next door, so it provides a fascinating glimpse at the evolution of Schindler's space architecture, as well as the way he adapted his multi-family solutions to a different site and scale. Also freshly restored.

BEST VIEWING Walk from below on Lucile around the corner and up Carnation (or vice versa) to take in the totality of the structure and how Schindler twisted and turned it to fit the site.

MORE INFO *Department of City Planning*

"COME ALIVE" IDEA Carey McWilliams once lived here — author of the best book on LA, *An Island on the Land*.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 44

DESTINATION 5
SACHS APARTMENTS /
MANOLA COURT

R.M. Schindler
1926-40

ORIGINAL CLIENT Herman Sachs

ADDRESS 1834 Lucile Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90026

WHY ON THE TRAIL? Schindler's earliest Silver Lake apartment building, Manola Court, evolved and expanded over 14 years in parallel with the architect's ideas about design. Much of the complex recently underwent a sensitive restoration, so it's looking great these days.

BEST VIEWING From below on Lucile and above on Edgecliffe. Try to get a peek into the landscaped courtyards.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS All of Lucile heading up the hill toward Micheltorena sparkles with (later) modernist gems.

MORE INFO *Los Angeles Department of City Planning*

Manola Court

Live to Give LA

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS HOUSE? JUMP TO OUR DISCOVERY CENTER ENTRY ON PAGE 58



DISCOVERY CENTER

Compiled by the FORT: LA Research Team

FACTS AND FIGURES

VAN PATTEN HOUSE

YEAR BUILT 1934

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Concrete walls and beams in basement, wood frame, stucco finish, wood finish of stained Russian Ash, sliding sheet metal sash.

COST TO BUILD Unknown

DESCRIBE ANY OBSTACLE TO CONSTRUCTION In the mid-1930s, Silver Lake was dominated by the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which is characterized by white stucco walls, arched windows and doorways, and red tiled roofs. Following in the footsteps of Santa Barbara, some areas of Los Angeles, including Silver Lake, imposed building restrictions to ensure a uniformity of style and character within residential neighborhoods. Because of these constraints, Schindler was unable to give the Van Patten House a flat roof, as he usually did. Instead, the roof was sloped and covered in red tiles, and the exterior walls covered in white stucco.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Modern (with required Spanish Colonial Revival interventions)

Modernism in architecture, which emerged in the 1920s and grew in popularity throughout the twentieth century, was characterized by an emphasis on minimalism, clean lines, flat planes, and the use of simple geometries. New and innovative methods of construction using concrete and steel allowed for the creation of open floor plans, uninterrupted interiors, and large glass windows, further expanding the space by blurring the boundary between inside and outside.

IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE Many of the house's defining characteristics stem from the unusual need for three independent living spaces within the structure. Three stepped garages (now part of the living space) were built parallel to the street, and one bedroom was built on the main (top) floor, with the other two bedrooms below. Each private living space had a box-like shape that gave occupants two diagonal viewpoints—one facing the mountains, the other facing the reservoir. This gave the space an asymmetrical, undefined orientation that allowed each occupant to customize the interiors. Each bedroom also had its own terrace, and the bottom two had access to a private garden via ramps extending from these terraces.

BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

R. M. Schindler was an Austrian architect who moved to Los Angeles in 1922 to oversee the construction of Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. A blend of artist and engineer, he experimented with new and innovative materials, construction techniques, and spatial compositions, which led him to develop a distinctive style that was both forward-looking and responsive to local culture and climatic conditions. Schindler wanted his designs to embody the ideals of a classless society free from rigid physical and socio-political structures, and coexisting in harmony with nature.

In the 1920s, Schindler designed several residences that are now considered emblematic of California Modernism, well before the style became widely popular. Despite his prescience, he was not included in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark International Style exhibition in 1932, or in the Case Study Houses program, which ran from the 1940s to the 1960s. However, he is now recognized as one of the architects who helped define the modern architecture movement in Southern California.

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT'S WORK

As with many of Schindler's other hillside houses, the Van Patten House takes advantage of its location to provide privacy to its occupants. While its street-facing façade is closed, the side of the house that hangs over the slope is completely open. The living spaces—like those at the Wolfe House—have large windows and terraces overlooking the reservoir, which creates a communion between the interior and exterior spaces.

Like many of Schindler's most iconic structures (including his Kings Road House and the Wolfe House), the Van Patten House was built with multiple separate residents in mind. Here, Elizabeth Van Patten and two other women required separate living quarters with shared common areas, and Schindler's intersecting and stacked design enabled this arrangement. Schindler also designed furniture for the house, something that he did often.

HOW THE ARCHITECT MIGHT BE RESPONDING TO A SITE PROBLEM

Schindler made the most of the unusual site, using its steep incline to give his clients total privacy. As at the Wolfe House, the majority of the Van Patten house lies below street level. Only the three-car garage, with its "saw-tooth factory roof," is visible from the street.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The furniture that Schindler designed for the Van Patten House is considered to be "some of the most unusual furniture—what he called 'Unit Furniture'—that Schindler ever designed for one of his residences." (PCAD) The Unit pieces were made of lightweight plywood (a material that was just starting to be used in furniture design at the time) and were designed with mobility and change in mind. As Schindler designed the house's three private suites to be adaptable to each occupant's taste, he designed the furniture so that it could be reconfigured and moved around the house at will.

MORE INFO

Ford, James, Ford, Katherine Morrow, *Modern House in America*. Architectural Book Pub. Co., 1940. pp. 102-103.

Friedman, Alice T. *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History*. Harry N. Abrams, 1998. pp. 18-19; 22; 226.

Gebhard, David. *Schindler*. Thames and Hudson, 1971. pp. 142-144.

"Lot 110: Rudolph Schindler. 'Unit' chair and ottoman, from the Van Patten residence, Los Angeles, California." *Phillips*, July 2020.

"Rudolph Schindler: A Chronology." *AD&A Museum, UC Santa Barbara*.

ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Elizabeth Van Patten

There is no easily accessible information about Elizabeth Van Patten, and the names of the two other original occupants of the house seem to have been lost to time.

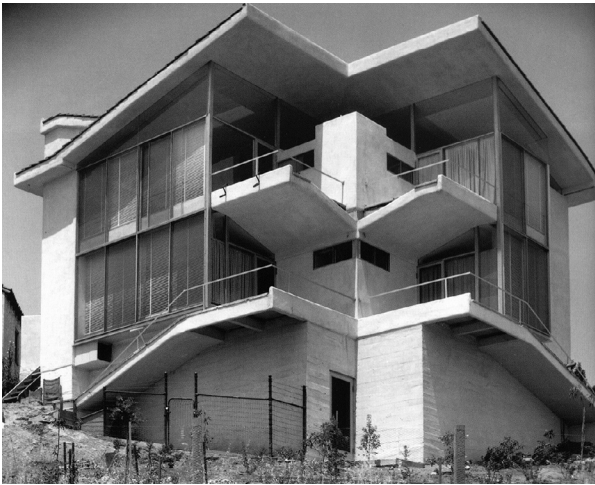
In 1997, the Van Patten House was sold to film director *Timothy Armstrong*.

MORE INFO

"RUDOLF (aka RUDOLPH) Michael Schindler (1887-1953)," *USModernist*.

RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

HISTORIC PHOTOS



Exterior of the Van Patten House
(courtesy of **The Cosmic Inspiro-Cloud**)



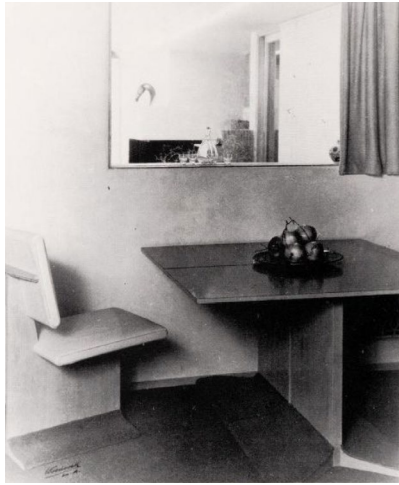
Exterior of the Van Patten House
(courtesy of **Wikimapia**)



Living room of the Van Patten House
with original Schindler-designed furniture
(courtesy of **August Sarnitz**)



Living room of the Van Patten House
with original Schindler-designed furniture
(courtesy of **August Sarnitz**)



Breakfast room of the Van Patten House with original Schindler-designed furniture (courtesy of **August Sarnitz**)



Living room of the Van Patten House with original Schindler-designed furniture (courtesy of **August Sarnitz**)



Interior of the Van Patten House with original Schindler-designed furniture (courtesy of **August Sarnitz**)



"Unit" chair and ottoman from the Van Patten House (courtesy of **Phillips**)

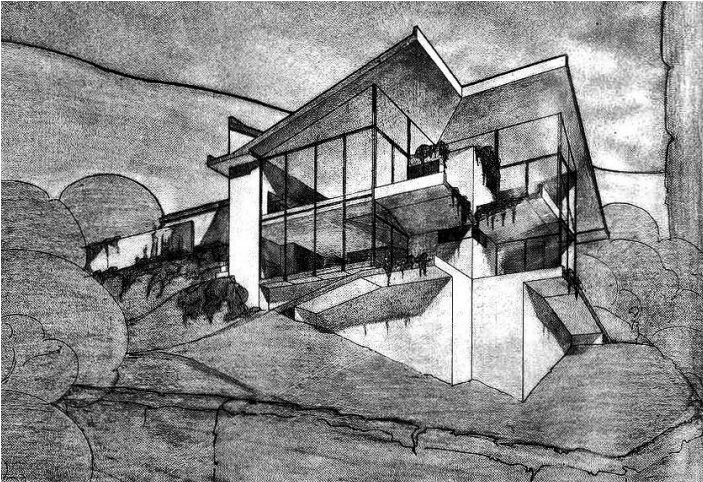


"Unit" couch from the Van Patten House (courtesy of **Phillips**)

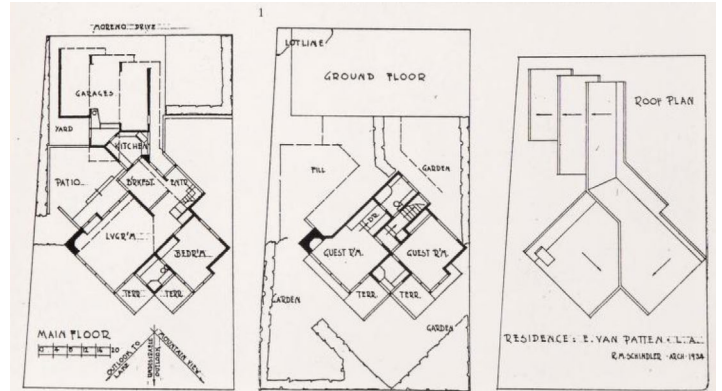


R.M. Schindler (photo by Edward Weston, courtesy of **David Leclerc**)

BLUEPRINTS OR FLOOR PLANS



Schindler's sketch of the Van Patten House viewed from the Southeast, 1934 (reproduced from **Women and the making of the modern house: a social and architectural history** by Alice T. Friedman)



Floorplan of the Van Patten House by Schindler, 1934 (courtesy of **August Sarnitz**)

TALES AND TIMELINES

RELEVANT DATE 1934

Schindler draws up plans for the Van Patten House and construction begins.

1935

Construction is completed.

March 16, 1936

The date on a bill made out to Elizabeth Van Patten that was found on the back of one of Schindler's Unit chairs, which may indicate the end of the house's interior decoration.

July 31, 1997

Last recorded sale of the Van Patten House.

2018

Publication of *Making America Modern: Interior Design in the 1930s* by Marilyn F. Friedman, which uses the Van Patten House as one of its case studies.

MORE INFO "2320 Moreno Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90039." **Zillow**.

Friedman, Marilyn F. *Making America Modern: Interior Design in the 1930s*. Bauer And Dean, 2018.

FACTS AND FIGURES

MCALMON HOUSE

YEAR BUILT 1935-6

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Concrete, wood, stucco, glass, asphalt shingles, and steel.

COST TO BUILD \$6,000

DESCRIBE ANY OBSTACLE TO CONSTRUCTION Victoria Almon utilized the Housing Act of 1934 (passed during the Great Depression to make housing and home mortgages more affordable) to hire Schindler to design a personal residence for herself and her husband, as well as a stand-alone rental unit on the same lot. Because of McAlmon's tight budget (in a March 1935 letter to Schindler, she writes, "\$6000 on the mortgage plus \$1200 in cash is all I have or shall have."), Schindler resorted to the "plaster skin" method that he would use throughout the 1930s for both buildings. Because building with reinforced concrete was too expensive for his depression-era clients, he opted instead to use concrete only for the foundations, building the exterior walls out of wood covered in stucco.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE International Style

The International Style emerged in Europe after the first World War before making its way to North America in the 1920s. Coinciding with the rise of industrialization and prefabrication, the style embraced functionality, rationality and economy. It relied on modular design, structural systems, and the use of mass-produced, lightweight industrial materials while rejecting color and ornamentation. Structures built in this style often had an austere, box-like aesthetic, and usually featured flat roofs, repetition of lines and forms, and bands of windows.

OTHER FACTS AND FIGURES This house was built in the aftermath of the stock market crash of 1929, and the owner used the Housing Act of 1934 to afford it. This depression-era house was built with less expensive, machine-made materials than some of Schindler's more extravagant designs. It was one of only half a dozen commissions that R.M. Schindler received during the depression, making it difficult to refuse, but it also denotes a shift in his clientele, going from the rich to middle-class people who had an interest in avant-garde architecture.

IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

The McAlmon House consists of two structures built on a hillside, separated by gardens and linked by a staircase.

To build the guest house, located near street level, Schindler repurposed a small bungalow that was already on the lot, moving it from the top of the hill to lower down and then covering its façade with a “plaster skin” (wood and stucco) in his signature vocabulary of dynamic, interlocking volumes that seem to be in motion, each piece moving in a different direction, encouraging the eye to travel as it takes in the building’s sculptural quality. Some of the old bungalow’s original wood siding and its pitched roof have been left as-is but are invisible from the street.

The entrance to the guest house is on the side, where the old structure joins the new. The unit contains one bedroom, one bathroom, a kitchen, and a large living room with a fireplace. The kitchen and bedroom have lower ceilings, creating a cozy atmosphere, while the large living room has tall ceilings and a wall of sliding windows that extends to the outdoor patio, which enlarges the living space. A three-car garage is tucked underneath the structure.

Up the hillside, at the rear of the property, is the main house, which is accessed by a staircase. It’s a flat-roofed single-story structure that matches the guest house’s smooth stucco walls and irregular massing. The front door is recessed, shaded by a double-cantilever roof, and almost invisible from the street. The main house contains two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a large living room with a wall of windows providing views of the garden and beyond it, Glendale. It also has a large terrace with an indoor-outdoor fireplace. As in the guest house, part of the structure has been raised on beams to separate the common living spaces (living room and kitchen) from the private spaces (bedrooms and bathrooms).

In the main house, every room has built-in furniture made of plywood or a mix of plywood and wood stained in different colors depending on their location. The sofa-desk combo located in the living room has functional drawers and a shelving system and similar desks and shelving units can be found in both bedrooms, which also feature floor-to-ceiling plywood wall paneling. The railroad-style kitchen was obviously built for someone who doesn’t cook much; there’s a lot of storage but almost no counter space. It’s clear that Schindler’s intention was to avoid clutter by providing plenty of storage options so that residents would be able to fully appreciate the intentional atmosphere of the various spaces that he had created within the home.

The main house also features guest quarters with a separate entrance and a balcony with a partition for privacy. The guest bedroom’s windows face the opposite direction than the master bedroom, and in the kitchen, movable panels can separate the kitchen and visitor from the rest of the house, enabling host and guest to move about independently of each other.

Schindler saw color as an important design element, and selected colors so that his houses would blend into their landscape. He disliked white, preferring

muted colors and less saturated hues showing the material's grain or texture. An acquaintance of Don and Shirley Johnson, who owned the property for over 30 years in the late twentieth century, recalled that the exterior of the main house was bluish until the Johnsons decided to have it painted white, and a 1937 article in *California Arts & Architecture* states that the living room walls were originally pale yellow and the carpet was beige.

BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

R. M. Schindler was an Austrian architect who moved to Los Angeles in 1922 to oversee the construction of Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. A blend of artist and engineer, he experimented with new and innovative materials, construction techniques, and spatial compositions, which led him to develop a distinctive style that was both forward-looking and responsive to local culture and climatic conditions. Schindler wanted his designs to embody the ideals of a classless society free from rigid physical and socio-political structures, and coexisting in harmony with nature.

In the 1920s, Schindler designed several residences that are now considered emblematic of California Modernism, well before the style became widely popular. Despite his prescience, he was not included in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark International Style exhibition in 1932, or in the Case Study Houses program, which ran from the 1940s to the 1960s. However, he is now recognized as one of the architects who helped define the modern architecture movement in Southern California.

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT'S WORK

Both structures feature several hallmarks of the International Style, including a horizontal orientation, a lack of ornamentation, smooth plaster walls, expansive glass walls, and flat roofs with closed eaves (in the case of the guest house, the original bungalow's gabled roof peaks through, but isn't visible from the street).

The exteriors of both structures are also done in Schindler's signature vocabulary of abstract, interlocking volumes, with cantilevered floating roofs adding visual drama.

Significant interior elements that mark the two buildings as Schindler designs include patios and gardens treated as extensions of the living spaces to encourage indoor/outdoor living, clerestory windows that let natural light into every room, and strategically placed windows and doors that open to create a cross breeze. The main house also contains several built-in desks, sofas, shelves and cabinetry, as well as custom-designed plywood furniture. Finally, in both structures, the floors are raised in some parts of the house and lowered in others to create a clear division between common spaces (living room, kitchen) and private spaces (bedrooms, bathrooms).

HOW THE ARCHITECT
MIGHT BE RESPONDING TO
A SITE PROBLEM

When McAlmon bought the gently sloping lot in 1935, it already had a structure on it: a small wooden bungalow built in either 1911 or 1923, depending on the source. Since McAlmon wanted a residence for herself as well as a guest house to be used as a rental property, Schindler moved the bungalow from its original position at the top of the hill to the front of the lot, adding a living room, patio, and garden, with a three-car garage tucked underneath the unit. He then wrapped the bungalow in a wood and plaster shell in his signature style in order to mask the older building's original façade, but he kept its pitched roof, a reminder of an earlier architectural style.

McAlmon's personal residence, a new construction designed in the same vocabulary of forms, was placed at the top of the hill in order to give the owner some privacy while taking advantage of spectacular views of Glendale and the San Gabriel Mountains beyond.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT

In 1937, images of the house were published in *The Architect*, *Architectural Forum*, and *California Arts and Architecture*.

ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Victoria McAlmon

Victoria May McAlmon was born in Dresden, Ontario, Canada, in January 1879. Her father, Rev. John A. McAlmon, was a Presbyterian minister, and he moved the family to South Dakota at the turn of the century. She studied at the State Normal School (now Dakota State University) and graduated with a Ph.B. from the University of Chicago at Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1912. She was a leader in the labor movement, becoming the first woman president of the Minnesota Women's Trade Union League, the vice president of Alice Paul's National Federation of Women, the vice president of the Minnesota Working People's League, and an advocate for women's suffrage and free speech.

In 1930, McAlmon was fired by the Minneapolis school board for her political activities. She moved to Los Angeles, where her mother and sister already lived, and where she continued labor organizing, acting as an American Federation of Teachers (AFT) organizer and as a member of the advisory council of the State Employment Service. By the time her Schindler house was built in 1936, she was married and worked as a vocational and placement secretary at the Los Angeles Junior College.

McAlmon was close to her family, especially her brother, Robert McAlmon, an openly gay writer and publisher who co-founded the literary magazine *Contact* with the poet William Carlos Williams in New York before moving to Paris to establish the publishing company Contact Editions, which published early works by Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway.

By all accounts, McAlmon was a fiscally responsible bohemian who valued art, literature, and social justice. She worked tirelessly and loved to socialize, and her house was designed to suit her lifestyle. In fact, in her correspondence with Schindler, she gives the architect detailed descriptions of her requirements. Her house is shielded from the street to give her privacy—"I want to see as little of my neighbor's property as I may"—and features multiple built-in writing desks—"I want all the built-in furniture that I can have." There is also a large living room made for entertaining. According to former neighbors and tenants, over the years, her visitors included first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, mural painter Diego Rivera, and writer Anaïs Nin, whom her brother had befriended in Paris.

McAlmon spent the last years of her life in Contra Costa County, near San Francisco, where she died in 1969, at the age of 90. She was buried at the Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

By 1966, the McAlmon House was owned by Don and Shirley Johnson, who would live in the main house and rent out the guest house for more than half a century.

In 2008, the house was purchased by Larry Schaffer, owner of the design store OK. Schaffer initiated a major restoration, striving to remain as faithful to Schindler and McAlmon's original vision as possible. He also petitioned to get the house designated a Historic-Cultural Monument, which took effect in 2011.

QUOTES FROM OWNERS

"For architecture to be great, at some point it has to stop being architecture and start being the thing it intended to be—a place to live, a place to study, a place to work. This house was just a piece of architecture to me when I moved in and I liked it very much. It took some months of living there to begin to experience it as a house—a house where the light is beautiful and always changing, a house that is a great place to be alone, or with friends and family." —Larry Schaffer, current owner, 2010.

RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

CURRENT PHOTOS



McAlmon House
(photo by **Michael Locke**)



Guest house street façade
(photo by **Michael Locke**)



Guest house side view showing preexisting bungalow
(photo by **Michael Locke**)



Guest house façade detail
(photo by **Larry Schaffer**)



Guest house patio
(courtesy of LA Curbed)



Main house during renovation, 2009
(photo by **Larry Schaffer**)



Original built-in, 2009
(photo by **Larry Schaffer**)



New period-accurate faucet
(courtesy of **Yoshihiro Makino**)



Guest house exit to the terrace
(photo by **Larry Schaffer**)



Guest house living room
(courtesy of **LA Curbed**)



Guest house bedroom
(courtesy of **LA Curbed**)



Guest house kitchen
(courtesy of **LA Curbed**)

HISTORIC PHOTOS



Guest house
(courtesy of **The Cosmic Inspiro-Cloud**)



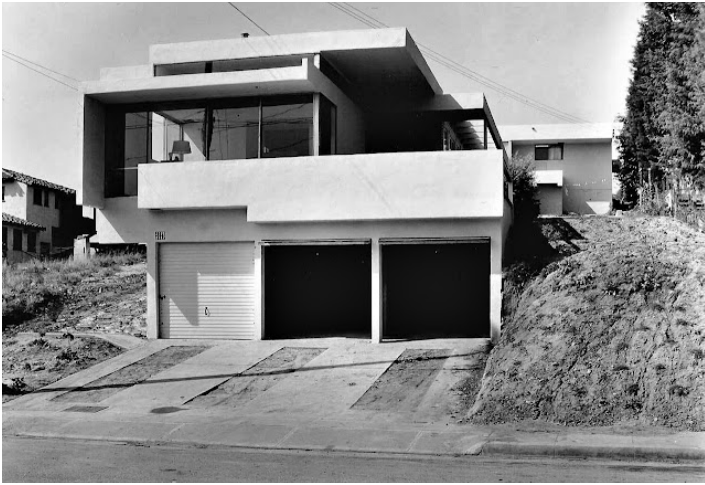
Main house, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



Main house, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



Main house, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



Guest house, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



View from the street, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



McAlmon House, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



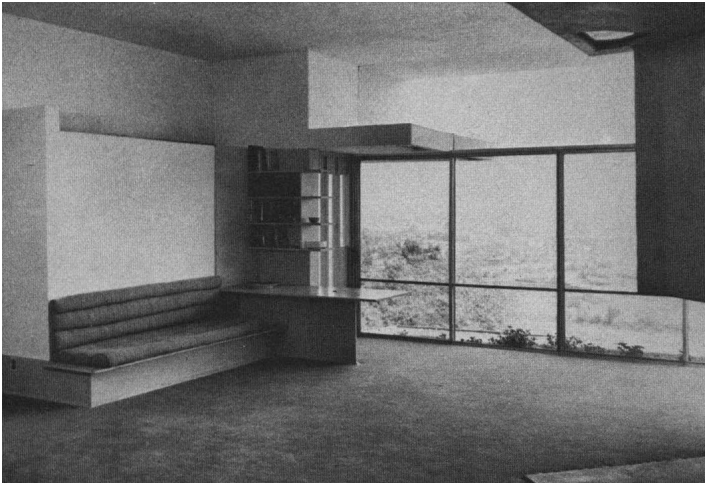
McAlmon House, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



Lawn and views, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



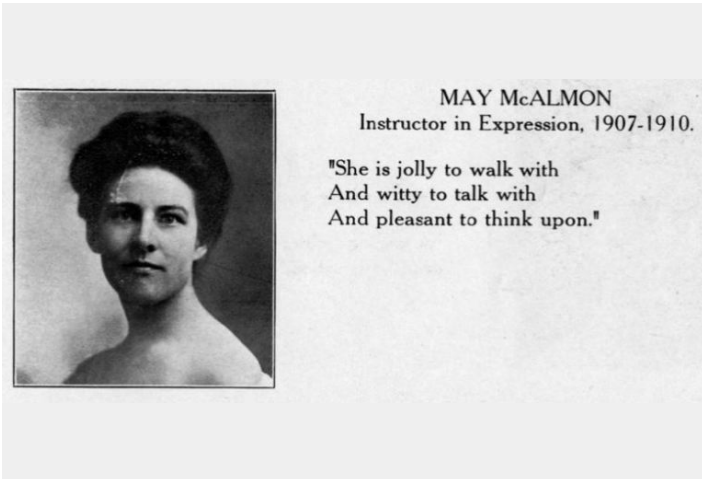
Entrance of main house, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



Living room of main house with views, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)



Living room of main house with fireplace, 1937
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of Getty Research Institute)

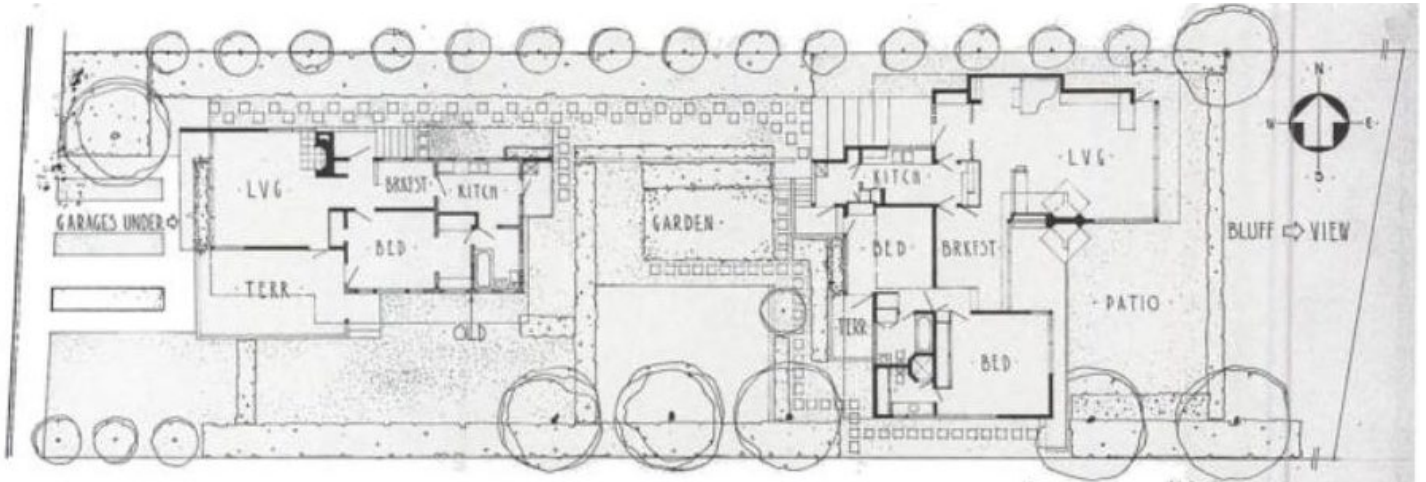


Victoria May McAlmon
(courtesy of **History in South Dakota**)



R.M. Schindler
(courtesy of the **MAK Center**)

BLUEPRINTS OR FLOOR PLANS



(courtesy of **The (R.M.) Schindler List**)



(courtesy of **The (R.M.) Schindler List**)

YOUTUBE RELATED LINK **Schindler McAlmon House**

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TALES AND TIMELINES

RELEVANT DATE

1935-6

The McAlmon House is built.

mid-1960s

The house is purchased by Don and Shirley Johnson, who would own it for over 25 years.

1980s

The Johnsons hire landscape architect Emmet Wemple to redesign the garden, planting citrus trees, agaves and other species of plants.

1981 to early 2000s

The Johnsons make various alterations to the property, adding a garden shed and lattice fence in the garden, remodeling the main house's kitchen, waterproofing the guest house, and adding a staircase leading up to the main house with a ramp and a gate. Going against Schindler's original design, they have the interiors and exteriors of both structures, as well as all of the built-in furniture, painted white.

October 2008

Larry Schaffer, owner of the design store OK, buys the property and initiates a major restoration of both structures.

2011

The McAlmon House is designated a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

FACTS AND FIGURES

HOW HOUSE

YEAR BUILT 1925

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Redwood, concrete, stucco, and glass.

COST TO BUILD Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Modern

Modernism in architecture, which emerged in the 1920s and grew in popularity throughout the twentieth century, was characterized by an emphasis on minimalism, clean lines, flat planes, and the use of simple geometries. New and innovative methods of construction using concrete and steel allowed for the creation of open floor plans, uninterrupted interiors, and large glass windows, further expanding the space by blurring the boundary between inside and outside.

OTHER FACTS AND FIGURES The house was published in *Taut* and in *Architectural Record* in 1929.

IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

At 2400 square feet, the How House is large for a Schindler. In 2001, the *Los Angeles Times* described the spacial concept that guided the architect's design: "The house was conceived as a series of interlocking squares, each decreasing in size. The dining room and study enclose two sides of a square terrace; the terrace frames a square light-well that lets air into the bedrooms below. Views open up diagonally through the space—from the kitchen to the front door, from the terrace through the living room to the garden." (Ouroussoff, 2001)

The house's foundation and bottom story are made of concrete, while its upper stories are clad in redwood interspersed with large expanses of glass housed in delicate window frames. The interplay of wood and glass creates refractions and transparencies, allowing the house to harmonize with its surroundings. On his color selection, Schindler noted: "Natural concrete outside. Stained concrete and plaster inside tan to yellow. Stained redwood transparent gray green. Colors taken from foliage and bark of eucalyptus trees." (Steele, 1996)

Inside, the house contains four bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, four fireplaces, and custom-designed built-in furniture and shelving throughout. The two-story living room features floor-to-ceiling wood paneling and a two-story coffered ceiling, and it opens up to a large terrace whose cantilevered roof seems to float above the area reserved for outdoor dining.

BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

R. M. Schindler was an Austrian architect who moved to Los Angeles in 1922 to oversee the construction of Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. A blend of artist and engineer, he experimented with new and innovative materials, construction techniques, and spatial compositions, which led him to develop a distinctive style that was both forward-looking and responsive to local culture and climatic conditions. Schindler wanted his designs to embody the ideals of a classless society free from rigid physical and socio-political structures, and coexisting in harmony with nature.

In the 1920s, Schindler designed several residences that are now considered emblematic of California Modernism, well before the style became widely popular. Despite his prescience, he was not included in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark International Style exhibition in 1932, or in the Case Study Houses program, which ran from the 1940s to the 1960s. However, he is now recognized as one of the architects who helped define the modern architecture movement in Southern California.

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT'S WORK

The How House is composed of interlocking panels stacked on top of one another. Its interlocking volumes, cubic forms, and repeating geometric lines are typical of Schindler, and demonstrate how California Modernism grew out of European Modernism, adapting the style to Southern California's topography and climate while also imbuing it with an all-American optimism.

HOW THE ARCHITECT MIGHT BE RESPONDING TO A SITE PROBLEM

The How House is located on top of a steep hill surrounded by eucalyptus trees. By placing the house on a diagonal rather than in line with the curb, Schindler insured that its residents would have direct access to nature and be able to enjoy the views in multiple directions. In his notes, Schindler wrote that his concept for the How House was inspired by "the two outlooks which the location offered. The rooms form a series of right angle shapes placed above each other and facing alternatively north and south. This scheme provides sufficient terraces necessary for outdoor life." (Steele, 2005)

The house overlooks the railroad tracks leading into downtown Los Angeles, and was reportedly intended to serve as both a personal residence for James Eads How and his wife, and a dormitory for How's chosen family: migrant workers. A separate entrance gave travelers access to the bottom floor of the house, where they could wash, eat and sleep in one of the two small bedrooms before hopping a train to another city.

ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

James Eads How

James Eads How was a grandson of James Buchanan Eads, who made a fortune during the American Civil War by retrieving salvage from riverboat disasters along the Mississippi River. In 1874, Eads designed a bridge that spanned the Mississippi River, which was considered an engineering marvel, and made the Eads family famous.

Growing up, James Eads How preferred to live simply, refusing the help of the servants that had been a part of his life since birth. He studied theology, first at Meadville Theological School, where he was viewed as an eccentric because he lived frugally and donated most of his allowance to the poor, and then at Harvard, where his attempt to found a monastic order, The Brotherhood of the Daily Life, ultimately failed. He later studied at the University of Oxford in England, joining George Bernard Shaw's Fabian Society and becoming a vegetarian (which he remained for the rest of his life). Finally, he studied medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, but dropped out before he received his medical degree.

At the age of 25, How renounced his life of privilege. A deeply spiritual person, he saw Jesus as a crusader for the rights of the destitute, and believed that organized religion warped his teachings to serve the interests of capitalists. How felt morally obligated to put his wealth to good use, and chose to devote his life and fortune to improving the lives of unskilled workers, who were often migrants and homeless.

Around 1905, How founded the International Brotherhood Welfare Association, a union for migrant workers. The organization published *Hobo News*, a monthly socialist newspaper, ran Hobo Colleges dedicated to the "relief, edification and politicization of homeless indigents," and operated several Hobo Hotels, which provided free accommodations to migrant workers. He became known as the "Hobo Millionaire."

In addition to advocating for "hobos," How chose to live as one, even though he had both money and education. For over two decades, he traveled around the United States, hopping trains and doing manual labor whenever he could find it, wearing secondhand clothes and an untrimmed beard.

At the time, the sociologist Nels Anderson described How's lifestyle this way:

"Millionaire that he is, How has not failed to familiarize himself with every aspect of tramp life. He knows the life better than many of the veteran hobos. He has become so thoroughly absorbed in the work of what he describes

as organizing the 'migratory, casual, and unemployed'...workers that he practically loses interest in himself. He becomes obsessed with some task at times that he will walk the streets all day without stopping long enough to eat."

At the age of 50, How decided to settle down, although he continued to financially support his many advocacy projects. He married his secretary, Ingeborg Sorenson, and commissioned R.M. Schindler to design a house for them in Silver Lake—How's family probably knew Schindler from Chicago, where he and his wife, Pauline, had lived for several years in the late 1910s.

In July 1930, How fainted in Cincinnati Union Station and was taken to the hospital. He received medical care but died of pneumonia and starvation two weeks later, at the age of 56. He was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis.

QUOTES FROM OWNERS

In 1911, How told the *Washington Evening Star*: "Well, my grandfather built a bridge out in St. Louis and the family have been prominent and wealthy there at all times. When some of the money began to drift my way, I adopted the Christian view that seeing as I had not earned it at all, why I would use the interest at least toward helping the fellow who is out of work."

RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

CURRENT PHOTOS



James Eads How House as seen from Silver Ridge Avenue, 2006
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



James Eads How House
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



(photo by Niels Wouters, courtesy of Wikimedia)



(photo by Tim Street-Porter)



(courtesy of Azarchitecture)



(courtesy of Azarchitecture)



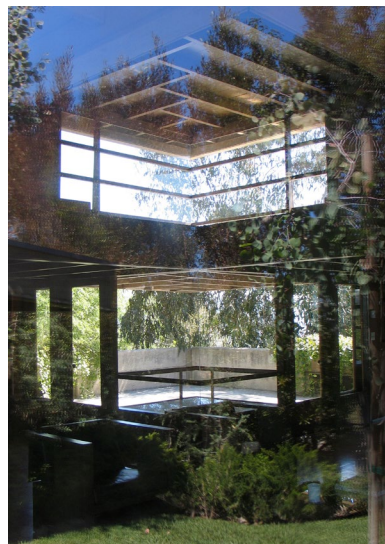
(courtesy of Azarchitecture)



(courtesy of Azarchitecture)



(courtesy of Azarchitecture)



(photo by **Sandra Peters**)



Garden designed by Richard Neutra
(courtesy of **Michael LaFreta**)



Back terrace
(photo by Leelah Foster,
courtesy of **HGTV**)



(courtesy of **Michael LaFreta**)



(courtesy of **Michael LaFreta**)



(photo by **Romi Corter**)



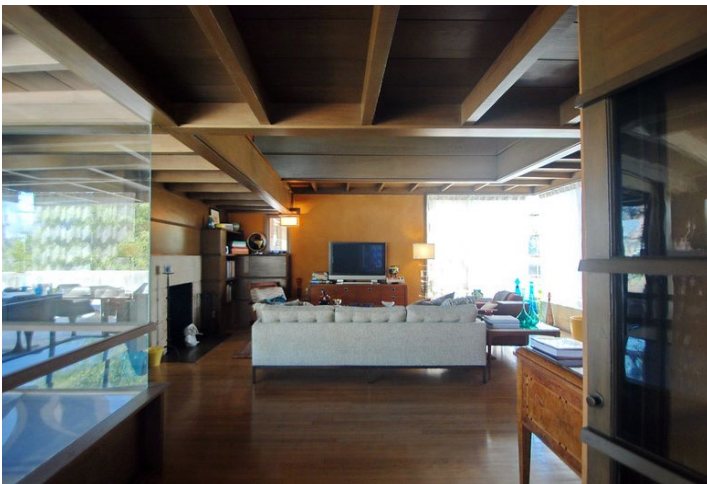
Living room ceiling
(courtesy of Deasy Penner Partners)



Living room
(courtesy of **Michael LaFreta**)



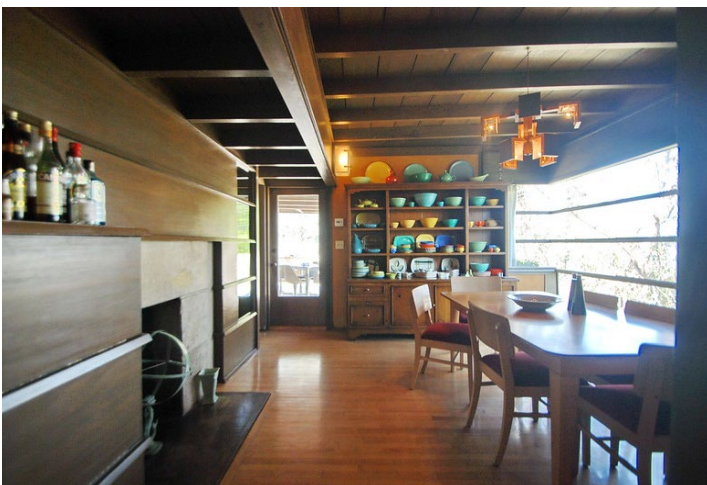
Built-ins
(courtesy of **Michael LaFreta**)



Living Room, 2016
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



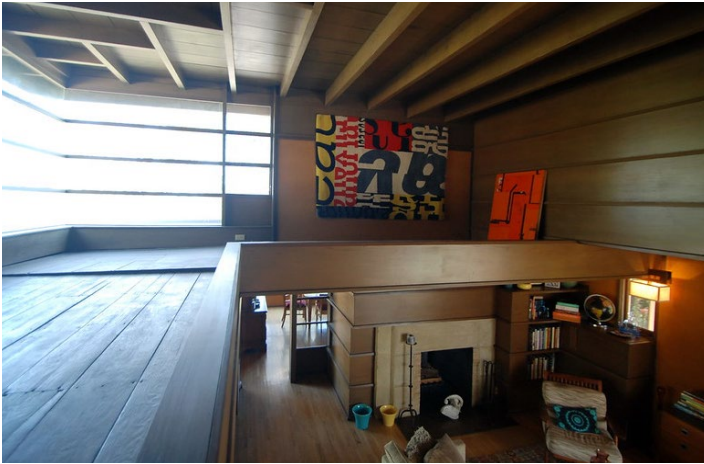
Den, 2016
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



Dining Room, 2016
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



Library, 2016
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



Mezzanine, 2016
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)



Bedroom, 2016
(courtesy of **Michael Locke**)

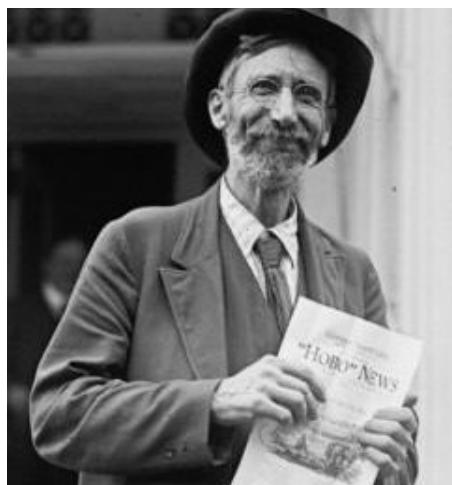
HISTORIC PHOTOS



James Eads How House, 1925
(photo by V. Baker, courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, Architecture & Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara**)



James Eads How House, 1925
(photo by V. Baker, courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, Architecture & Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara**)

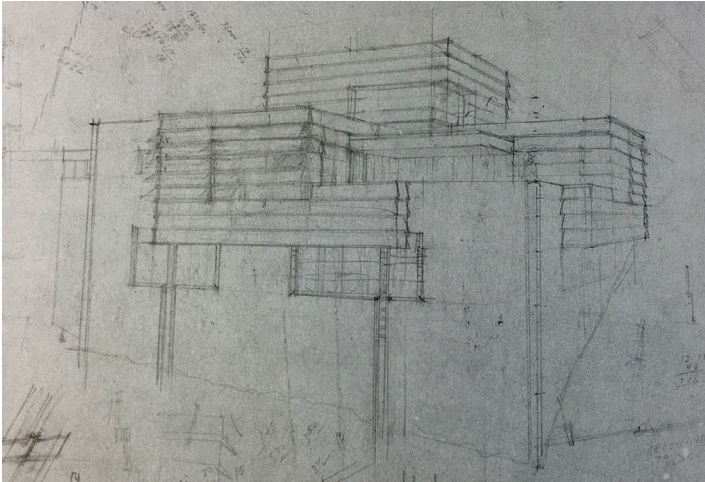


James Eads How
(courtesy of the **Library of Congress**)

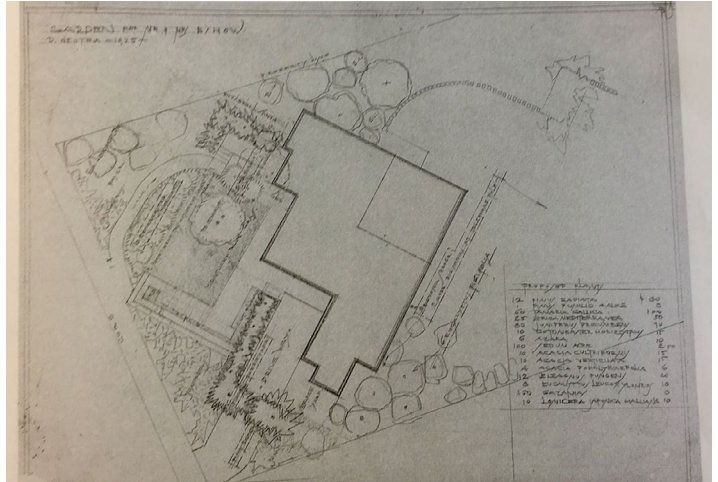


R.M. Schindler at Kings Road, holding his son, Mark. Mid-1920s
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)

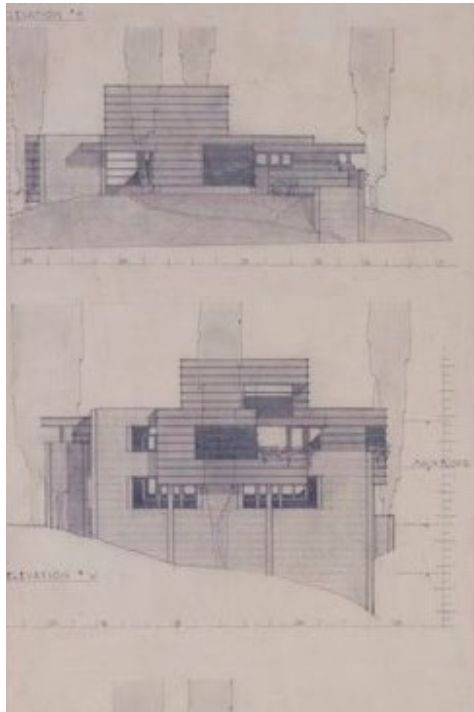
BLUEPRINTS OR FLOOR PLANS



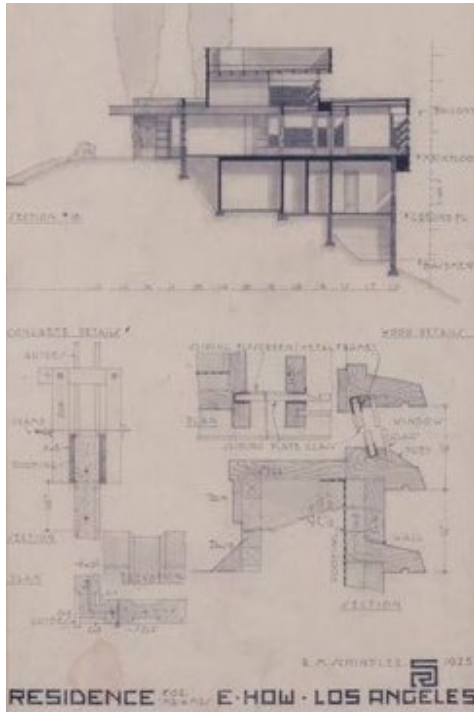
(courtesy of **The (R.M.) Schindler List**)



Garden plan by Richard Neutra
(courtesy of **The (R.M.) Schindler List**)



(courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, Architecture & Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara**)



(courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, Architecture & Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara**)

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TALES AND TIMELINES

RELEVANT DATE

1925

The James Eads How House is built.

1994

During this period, the house is owned by Lionel March, a professor in UCLA's Department of Architecture, and his wife, Maureen Mary.

2003

The house is sold to Michael LaFetra, a film producer, preservationist and supporter of modern architecture.

2004

LaFetra hires Jeff Fink, an architect and contractor who has restored thirteen Schindler houses, to conduct an extensive renovation of the property, bringing the house up to modern standards while respecting Schindler's original vision.

2007

The How House is designated a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

2012

The film executive Brad Kembel and his partner, Brazilian boutique owner Jimmy Ferrareze, purchase the house for \$1.3 million.

2016

The house is back on the market for \$2.5 million. It eventually sells to Spencer Velasquez, a DJ known as Daddy Differently.

ANECDOTE ABOUT THE STRUCTURE

Documents found during the house's restoration in the early 2000s revealed that architect Richard Neutra had designed the gardens surrounding the house.

FACTS AND FIGURES

FALK APARTMENTS

YEAR BUILT 1939-40

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Wood, stucco, and glass.

COST TO BUILD Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Modern

Modernism in architecture, which emerged in the 1920s and grew in popularity throughout the twentieth century, was characterized by an emphasis on minimalism, clean lines, flat planes, and the use of simple geometries. New and innovative methods of construction using concrete and steel allowed for the creation of open floor plans, uninterrupted interiors, and large glass windows, further expanding the space by blurring the boundary between inside and outside.

IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE

The T.S. Falk Apartments consist of four units: two one-bedroom, one-bath apartments; one two-bedroom, one-bath apartment; and a two-bedroom, two-bath penthouse equipped with two fireplaces, a rooftop garden, and a guest suite accessible from the garden. The apartments are connected by a small courtyard, and each unit has its own private outdoor space.

The three-level, wood and stucco building was designed by stacking interlocking volumes on a hillside lot so that each apartment would have both privacy and a spectacular view. The one-bedroom units are raised above street level to allow for views over the houses across the street, while the two-bedroom units, located further up the hill, face sixty degrees in the opposite direction. The penthouse terrace offers panoramic views of Silver Lake and the Hollywood Hills beyond.

Inside, each apartment has a different layout and unique features, including sliding glass walls, clerestory windows and skylights allowing light into every room, custom built-in furniture, wood paneling, and tile and hardwood floors.

The multi-level penthouse has the most complex floor plan, with Philippine mahogany built-ins filling various alcoves and corners, dividing public and

private spaces. The living room and dining room form an L shape that wraps around a terrace, and steps lead down to the entryway and master bedroom, which features a corner fireplace and mahogany-paneled walls. Underneath the bedroom is a study that can be reached via outdoor stairs from the garden. The guest suite is also accessed through the garden, ensuring the guests' privacy.

One of the penthouse's most impressive features is a plywood ceiling running the length of the living room and laid out in an intricate repeating pattern based on subdivisions of the 48-inch three-dimensional module that Schindler used as a proportioning system in many of his designs. The ceiling folds down to a door-height datum and extends beyond a glass wall to an exterior overhang above the terrace, bringing the inside out.

Over the past eight decades, the Falk Apartments have been meticulously maintained, and the electric wiring and plumbing have been upgraded, but no major alterations or additions have been made to the complex since its construction in 1940.

BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

R. M. Schindler was an Austrian architect who moved to Los Angeles in 1922 to oversee the construction of Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. A blend of artist and engineer, he experimented with new and innovative materials, construction techniques, and spatial compositions, which led him to develop a distinctive style that was both forward-looking and responsive to local culture and climatic conditions. Schindler wanted his designs to embody the ideals of a classless society free from rigid physical and socio-political structures, and coexisting in harmony with nature.

In the 1920s, Schindler designed several residences that are now considered emblematic of California Modernism, well before the style became widely popular. Despite his prescience, he was not included in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark International Style exhibition in 1932, or in the Case Study Houses program, which ran from the 1940s to the 1960s. However, he is now recognized as one of the architects who helped define the modern architecture movement in Southern California.

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT'S WORK

Many features that are distinctive of Schindler's work can be found at the Falk Apartments, starting with the building's siting on an oddly-shaped sloping lot. Schindler made the most of this constraint by stacking and arranging interlocking volumes with flat roofs in order to maximize views and privacy for all residents.

This structure is one of the first of many featuring Schindler's "plaster skin design," a construction method that he developed in the 1930s. When building with reinforced concrete became too expensive, he opted instead to use wood covered in stucco on the outside and plaster on the inside to create smooth, white exterior walls.

As was Schindler's modus operandi, each of the complex's four apartments has a different floor plan, custom built-in furniture, and unique features such as warm wood paneling, a cleverly positioned skylight, a corner fireplace, or an intricate plywood ceiling. Finally, floor-to-ceiling windows flood the interior spaces with natural light while patios and terraces ensure the seamless indoor-outdoor transition that is one of the hallmarks of modernism.

HOW THE ARCHITECT MIGHT BE RESPONDING TO A SITE PROBLEM

The three-story building sits on two adjacent lots that form a triangular shape at the corner of Carnation Avenue and Lucile Avenue. To make the most of the sloping corner lot, Schindler used interlocking forms stacked on top of each other and rotated in different directions. The two one-bedroom apartments run parallel to Lucile Avenue, with their garages facing Lucile, while the two-bedroom apartment and the penthouse step up along Carnation Avenue, one on top of the other, with their garages facing Carnation. The two wings of the buildings are rotated at 60 degrees to each other in order to align with the two streets, providing privacy to the occupants of each apartment, as well as unobstructed views of the surrounding neighborhood and the Hollywood Hills beyond.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The Falk Apartments complex is one of only six multi-family projects that Schindler completed over the course of his career, and is just down the street from two of the others: the Bubeshko Apartments and the Sachs Apartments.

ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

S. T. Falk and Pauline Falk

Samuel Theodore “Ted” Falk was born in Pinsk, Russia on May 26, 1894. He immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1903, eventually settling in Los Angeles. In adulthood, he worked as an engineer, though some sources suggest that he may have also acted as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles Bag Company.

Pauline D. Falk was also born in Russia, near Kiev (which is now part of the Ukraine) on October 17, 1902. She was four years old when her family immigrated to the United States and settled in New York City, where she grew up. When her father decided to go back to Russia, her mother had to find employment outside the home, putting young Pauline in charge of the household, including her sickly younger sister. This is how she developed her independence and her affinity for nurturing friends and relatives.

When Pauline returned to the United States after studying in Europe, her mother encouraged her to get married and introduced her to Ted Falk. The Falks were married in 1936 and honeymooned on Catalina Island, off the coast of Los Angeles.

Pauline’s lifelong passion was art. She was a voracious reader and a lover of classical music, she held painting sessions at her home for which she’d hire nude models, and she belonged to a group of women who met monthly to discuss psychological books and issues. Quietly philanthropic, she gave to museums and helped multiple budding artists and musicians further their training. Although, by all accounts, she was a tiny woman, she drew people to her, and many relied on her for support and advice.

After living in Silver Lake and then on Lido Isle, where Ted participated in boat races, the Falks bought an acre of land in Santa Ana, overlooking Peter’s Canyon Lake reservoir. There, they built a spacious house designed by Pauline in which they would spend the rest of their lives. S.T. Falk died at home on August 2, 1971 at the age of 77, and Pauline Falk died at home on October 11, 2007, at the age of 104. They are both buried at the Fairhaven Memorial Park in Santa Ana.

The history of the Falk Apartments intersects with that of iconic architects William Krisel and Dan Palmer, who designed thousands of Mid-century Modern tract houses, including many of the Alexander Homes in Palm Springs.

When Krisel was an architecture student at the University of Southern California (USC), he spent three summers working in the office of architect Victor Gruen, where he met Dan Palmer. Palmer had moved to Los Angeles in 1947 with his wife Doris, and since Pauline Falk was his aunt, the Palmers lived in one of the units of the Falk Apartments.

In the spring of 1949, during Krisel's last semester at USC, he received his first professional commission from Pauline Falk: designing (along with Palmer) a rooftop pergola and deck improvements for her apartment complex. Palmer and Krisel's project was published in *Sunset* magazine in 1951, and appeared in the anthology *Sunset Ideas for Hillside Homes* in 1953. The pergola was still intact in 2015, but has since been taken down.

When Palmer and Krisel decided to start their own architecture firm in 1950, the Falk Apartments' dirt floor basement served as their makeshift office until they could afford to rent a proper office space in Westwood.

The writer, journalist and political activist Carey McWilliams was a tenant in the Falk Apartments in 1944.

In the 1980s, the husband-and-wife production design team David Wasco and Sandy Reynolds-Wasco lived at the Falk Apartments for a few years. In the following decades, the couple went on to design sets for Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, Wes Anderson's *The Royal Tenenbaums*, and dozens of other movies. They won an Oscar in 2016 for their work on Damien Chazelle's *La La Land*.

In 2015, the Falk Apartments were bought by John-Mark Horton, who restored a number of original details and petitioned to have the complex designated a Historic-Cultural Monument.

RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

CURRENT PHOTOS



(photo by **Michael Locke**)



(photo by **Michael Locke**)



The Falk Apartments seen from Lucile Ave
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



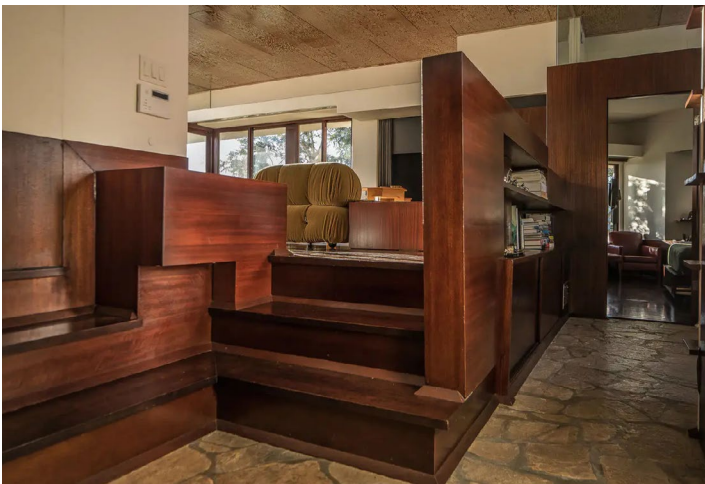
The Falk Apartments seen from Lucile Ave
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Penthouse living room
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Penthouse built-in cabinet
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Original Schindler mahogany built-ins in the penthouse
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



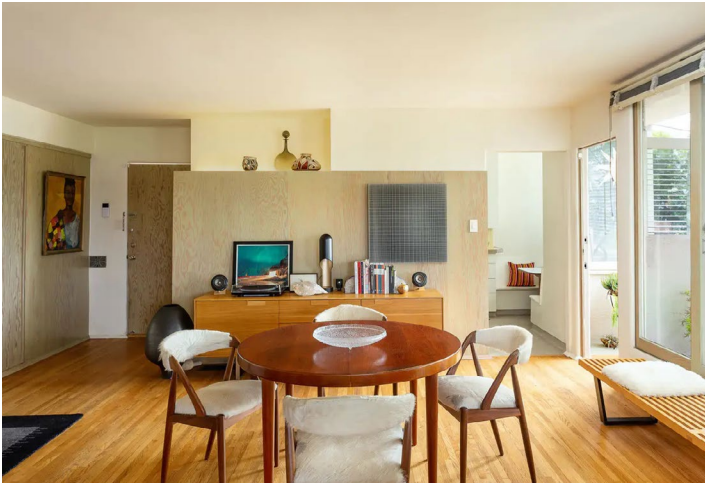
Penthouse study with original Schindler built-ins
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Penthouse plywood ceiling
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



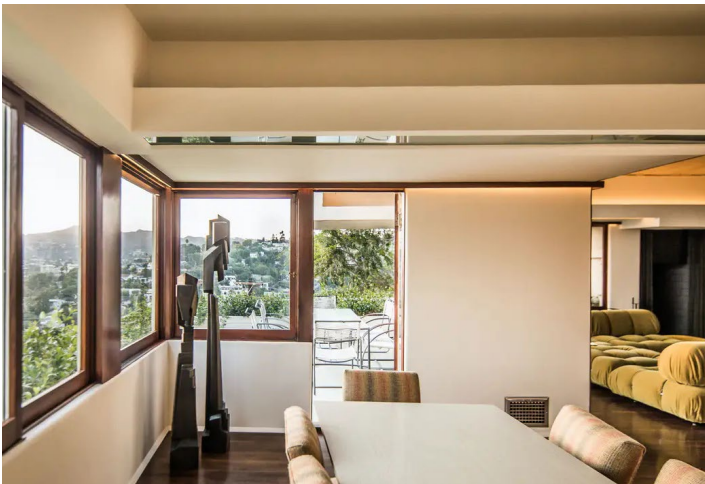
Schindler built-in and French doors
leading to the garden
(photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Recreation of Schindler's original plywood paneling in a one-bedroom apartment (photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Dining Room of one-bedroom apartment (photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Penthouse dining area and views (photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)



Remodeled penthouse kitchen featuring original built-in banquette (photo by Cameron Carothers, courtesy of **Dwell**)

HISTORIC PHOTOS



Falk Apartments
(photo by Dr. Fritz Block, courtesy of USC Libraries)



The Falk Apartments seen from Lucile Ave. circa 1943
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, University of California, Santa Barbara**)



The Falk Apartments seen from Carnation Ave. circa 1943
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, University of California, Santa Barbara**)



Falk Apartments, 1947
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Penthouse patio
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Living room
(photo by Dr. Fritz Block, courtesy of USC Libraries)



Stairs to the living room and flagstone floor, 1947
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Penthouse living room, 1947
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Penthouse living room and terrace, 1947
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, University of California, Santa Barbara**)



Penthouse fireplace, 1947
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the **R. M. Schindler papers, University of California, Santa Barbara**)



Penthouse second fireplace, 1947
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Penthouse fireplace and window, 1947
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Plywood built-ins, 1947
(photo by Julius Shulman,
courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Plywood ceiling and built-ins, 1947
(photo by Julius Shulman,
courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Penthouse guest bedroom, 1947
(photo by Julius Shulman,
courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Kitchen cupboards, closed, 1947
(photo by Julius Shulman,
courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Kitchen cupboards, open, 1947
(photo by Julius Shulman,
courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



Terrace
(courtesy of John Crosse)

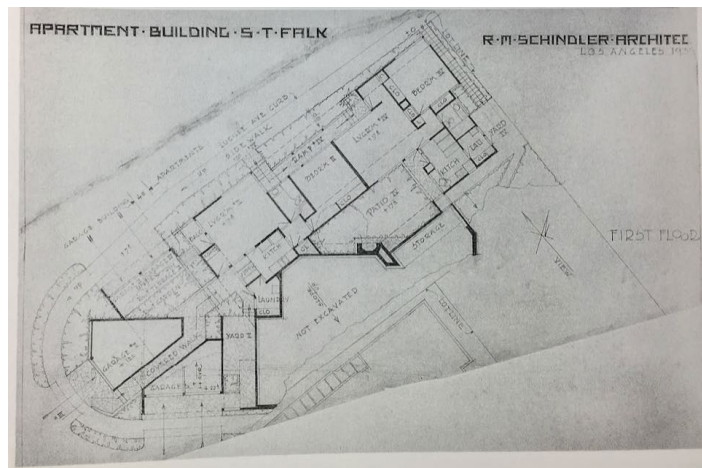


Pauline Falk
(courtesy of the **Orange County Register**)



R.M. Schindler at Kings Road, holding his son, Mark. Mid-1920s
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)

BLUEPRINTS OR FLOOR PLANS



Plan of the Falk Apartments
(courtesy of **The (R.M.) Schindler List**)

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TALES AND TIMELINES

RELEVANT DATE

August 1939

The building permit for the erection of the Falk Apartments is approved.

1940

The Falk Apartments are completed.

Spring 1949

Budding architect William Krisel and Dan Palmer (Pauline Falk's nephew) design a pergola for the Falk Apartments' penthouse deck. It's Krisel's first professional commission.

1950

Palmer and Krisel establish their first architecture office in the unfinished basement of the Falk Apartments.

1951

Palmer and Krisel's rooftop deck is published in *Sunset* magazine, and later included in the anthology *Sunset Ideas for Hillside Homes*.

2015

The Falk Apartments are on the market for the first time in 50 years. The complex sells for \$2.4 million to the interior designer John-Mark Horton.

August 2016

The complex is designated a Historic-Cultural Monument (No. 1133).

2020

The complex is listed for sale for \$3.65 million.

FACTS AND FIGURES

SACHS APARTMENTS / MANOLA COURT

YEAR BUILT 1926-40

MATERIALS EMPLOYED Wood, stucco, asphalt, and glass.

COST TO BUILD Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Three of the buildings are International Style, the other two are Spanish Colonial Revival modified with International Style elements

The International Style emerged in Europe after the first World War before making its way to North America in the 1920s. Coinciding with the rise of industrialization and prefabrication, the style embraced functionality, rationality and economy. It relied on modular design, structural systems, and the use of mass-produced, lightweight industrial materials while rejecting color and ornamentation. Structures built in this style often had an austere, box-like aesthetic, and usually featured flat roofs, repetition of lines and forms, and bands of windows.

Two of the five buildings that make up the Sachs Apartments were built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in the late 1910s or early 1920s, but were modified by Schindler in the 1930s to fit the complex's overall aesthetic.

OTHER FACTS AND FIGURES Images of the completed Sachs Apartments were published in *American Home* magazine in 1942.

IDEAS AND PROCESS THAT WENT INTO THIS STRUCTURE The Sachs Apartments is a multi-family complex designed in three stages between 1926 and 1940 on a steep street-to-street slope in Silver Lake. It consists of sixteen apartments housed within five buildings spanning three adjacent lots. Three of those buildings were designed from the ground up by R.M. Schindler, while the other two were pre-existing Spanish Colonial Revival-style structures that Schindler modified to fit the complex's modern aesthetic. Like a Greek or Italian hillside town, the complex cascades down the hill and the apartments are interconnected by stairways, terraced paths and gardens, creating a sense of community.

With the Sachs Apartments, Schindler moved away from steel-and-concrete construction in favor of a wood frame covered in stucco, a more affordable option with a similar look. Many of the building's features were intended to suit California's warm, dry climate, including the large windows that let in natural light and fresh air, and the multitude of balconies, patios and terraces that ensure a seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

Inside, each apartment is unique, with different floor plans, materials, and features. Some have a fireplace, others a living room accented with wooden beams, or a wood-paneled bedroom. Some kitchens have light wood cabinetry while, in other units, the cupboards are off-white. All of the units have light wood floors and multiple custom built-ins. The units are tied together by the exterior's geometric arrangement of windows and by the abstract, DeStijl-adjacent ornamentation that gives all of the buildings a vertical emphasis up the hill.

BIOGRAPHY OF ARCHITECT

R. M. Schindler was an Austrian architect who moved to Los Angeles in 1922 to oversee the construction of Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House. A blend of artist and engineer, he experimented with new and innovative materials, construction techniques, and spatial compositions, which led him to develop a distinctive style that was both forward-looking and responsive to local culture and climatic conditions. Schindler wanted his designs to embody the ideals of a classless society free from rigid physical and socio-political structures, and coexisting in harmony with nature.

In the 1920s, Schindler designed several residences that are now considered emblematic of California Modernism, well before the style became widely popular. Despite his prescience, he was not included in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark International Style exhibition in 1932, or in the Case Study Houses program, which ran from the 1940s to the 1960s. However, he is now recognized as one of the architects who helped define the modern architecture movement in Southern California.

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURE THAT ARE TYPICAL OF ARCHITECT'S WORK

The Sachs Apartments are a classic expression of Schindler's then-radical ideology and avant-garde style. Simultaneously sculptural and functional, the structure implies a look towards a bright, utopian future. Large windows let in natural light and fresh air while providing impressive views to residents, while multiple balconies, patios, decks, terraces and verdant gardens create a seamless flow from indoor to outdoor. The geometric placement of windows, and the exterior's De Stijl-adjacent ornamental brackets accentuate the buildings' vertical thrust.

HOW THE ARCHITECT MIGHT BE RESPONDING TO A SITE PROBLEM

The three plots of land on which the complex is built are not only steeply sloped but also located between two streets, Lucile Avenue and Edgecliffe Drive. This presented engineering and design challenges, but it also enabled Schindler to give each unit a unique view of Los Feliz, the Hollywood sign and the Griffith Observatory.

ORAL HISTORIES AND OWNERS

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNERS

Herman Sachs

The Sachs Apartments were built for R.M. Schindler's long-time friend, Herman Sachs, an artist and art educator best known for his murals and tile works, which adorn many Los Angeles landmarks.

Sachs (birth name: Hermann Segall) was born in 1883 in Bacău, Romania. He received early art instruction from his father, A Jewish-Romanian artist who served as a court painter for Queen Elisabeth of Romania. At the age of seventeen, Sachs immigrated to the United States, fleeing antisemitism in Europe. He settled in Chicago, where he attended the Art Institute of Chicago, and eventually became a naturalized American citizen. Sachs went back to Europe in 1913 to attend art school in Munich, simultaneously establishing the short-lived Munich School of Expressionists. When he returned to Chicago two years later, he exhibited and lectured at the Art Institute, and founded another art school, the Bauhaus-inspired Chicago Industrial Art School, which eventually closed due to lack of funding. It's during this period that Sachs met R.M. Schindler, probably through Schindler's future wife, Pauline Gibling, who lived in the building where Sach's art school was located.

After the closing of his Chicago school, Sachs accepted a position as the first director of the newly-opened Dayton Museum of Art (now known as the Dayton Art Institute). He lived in Dayton, Ohio, for two years, opening a third art school, the Dayton School of Industrial Art, which also collapsed due to lack of funds. During this period, Sachs also acted as a representative for the German Expressionist artist George Grosz, selling and promoting his work in the United States.

In 1923, Sachs moved to Los Angeles after being commissioned to design interiors for the new Southern California Gas Company Complex, located on Flower Street. There, he reunited with R.M. and Pauline Schindler, who had arrived in California the previous year. The friends were part of a German-speaking circle of artists, writers and filmmakers who had fled Europe due to the rise of fascism—the group also included the architect Richard Neutra and his wife Dione, the writer Thomas Mann, the Frankfurt School philosophers, and the painter/art dealer Galka Scheyer.

In Los Angeles, Sachs made artwork in a wide variety of mediums and, of course, found time to establish yet another cross-disciplinary art school: the Creative Art Students League of Los Angeles. After a visit to Sachs's L.A. studio in 1924, the photographer Barbara Morgan described it as such in a letter to her husband, Willard D. Morgan:

“Herman Sachs showed us some beautiful work at his studio the other night. Books that he had bound in papers he had dyed, pottery figurines, pottery of all kinds and of many glazes which he had made, among them an orange glaze (difficult color to obtain), many batiks of all kinds of designs bold and subtle, and silver ornaments. He had a number of panels of which the design was made with fine stitches of fine woolen threads and another hanging on a wall which was strangely crocheted in the richest gamut of colors. There was a number of dolls fantastically designed caricatures of people he had known. He showed us the manuscripts of three books that are to be published in Germany soon, one on Anatomy, “How to Paint,” and one on “Frescoes” all with illustrations. Then, too, there was a huge bookcase filled with rare illustrated art text books, folklore etc. etc. etc. He’s an interior decorator and is at present designing the interior of a bank in Santa Ana.”

Despite his eclectic art practice, Sachs’s memory lives on mostly through the murals, ceiling paintings, and tile works that he designed for the interiors of Los Angeles landmarks such as the Los Angeles City Hall and the Bullock’s Wilshire department store. One of his best-known works is a multicolored painting of California poppies adorning the ceiling of Union Station’s entry vestibule, for which he also created matching floor tiles and wall decorations. After being covered in a thick layer of tobacco tar and dirt for over 80 years, the ceiling painting was rediscovered in 2017 during an in-depth cleaning and restoration of the station.

Sachs started purchasing land on Lucile Avenue in Silver Lake in 1926, hiring Schindler to design an apartment complex that he could live in himself and use as a source of income. Over the next thirteen years, Sachs purchased neighboring lots as his budget allowed, and Schindler ended up building three original structures and remodeling two that were already standing on Sachs’s land. Sachs also added his own personal touch to the complex, designing a tiled floor for a patio located outside a two-bedroom apartment, and a mosaic made of tiles that he had taken home from various jobs. Sachs envisioned the complex as a haven for artists, and often used his large, high-ceilinged studio (which he called the music room) as a gathering space, hosting dinners and music recitals with his friends.

The sixteen-units apartment complex was finally completed in 1940. In November of that year, the fifty-one year old Sachs died of a heart attack. After his passing, his long-time friends Betty Katz and Alexander “Brandy” Brandner, an architect and Schindler collaborator, bought the complex and lived in the penthouse for three years, until they could move into a new house that Brandy had designed for them at the end of the street.

In the mid-1950s, two families of long-term tenants, the Woodburys and the Dahlstons, pooled their resources to jointly purchase the Sachs Apartments.

In 2013, the property was sold to its current owner, Paul Finegold, along with his wife, Gitu Bhavnani, and investor Elaine Panush. The couple obtained a Historic-Cultural Monument designation for the Sachs Apartments (now known as Manola Court) and hired the local firm Enclosures Architects to restore the complex. After researching the building’s history and looking

at Schindler's original plans in his archives at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the architects restored five apartments, including Sachs's own penthouse. According to Enclosures Architects, "the work was always coordinated in a way to preserve the building's historic character and maintain the original facades," and the cabinetry, finishes, and Schindler-designed furniture and built-ins were either preserved or re-created.

When Bhavnani died of TEMPI Syndrome, a rare blood disorder, in 2017, Finegold decided to honor her life by turning one of Manola Court's apartments into a short-term rental unit, with proceeds supporting rare blood-related disorder research.

Around the same time, some of the Sachs Apartments' long-time tenants claimed that Finegold had been harassing them to get them to move out, and refusing to properly maintain the units that had not yet been renovated. Several tenants (including Schindler expert Judith Sheine) also accused Finegold of making alterations to the interiors that were not in line with Schindler's original design, and of attempting to turn the complex into a bed and breakfast. In the fall of 2017, the tenants took their complaints to the Urban Design and Preservation Advisory Committee of the Silver Lake neighborhood council, which held a meeting entirely devoted to the fate of the Sachs Apartments. It seems that the matter is still unresolved.

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RESEARCH AND REPRESENTATIONS

CURRENT PHOTOS



Penthouse and cactus courtyard
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Entryway to the penthouse, music room, and maid's room
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Back façade
(photo by Charmaine David, courtesy of **Manola Court**)



One of the freestanding buildings
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Hundred year old jacaranda tree on the property
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Patio outside a two bedroom apartment designed by Herman Sachs
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



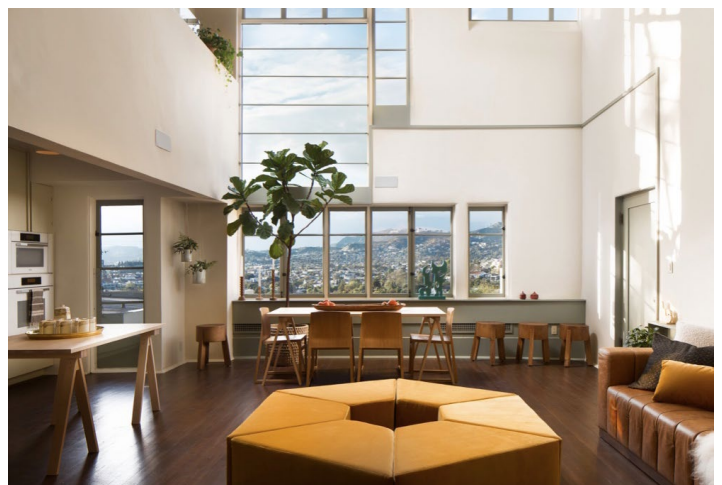
Cactus garden circa 2019
(photo by Virtually Here Studios, courtesy of **dezeen**)



Overview of the penthouse, music room, maid's room and central courtyard
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Live to Give apartment living room
(photo by Virtually Here Studios, courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Studio loft aka music room
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Dining nook in the penthouse, including original display case
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Live to Give apartment dining nook and kitchen
(photo by Virtually Here Studios, courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Living space in a studio
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Living and dining spaces in a studio
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Kitchen in a studio apartment
(courtesy of **Manola Court**)

HISTORIC PHOTOS



Entrance to Herman Sachs' personal apartment, date unknown
(courtesy of Ilana Gafni)



Sachs Apartments circa 1930s
(courtesy of Ilana Gafni)



Back façade
(photo by Julius Shulman circa 1938-1945,
courtesy of the Getty Research Institute)



View of Hernan Sachs
penthouse apartment
(photo by Julius Shulman circa 1938-
1945, courtesy of the **Getty Research
Institute**)



Façade
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the **Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara**)



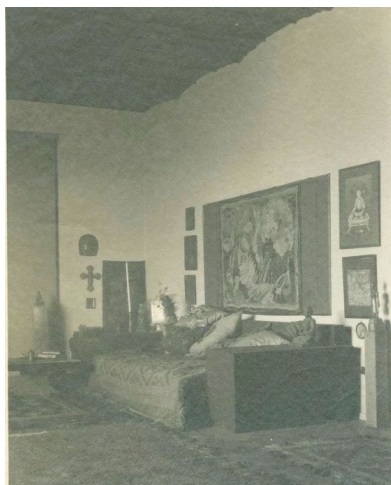
(photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of the **Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara**)



Cactus garden
 (courtesy of the Esther McCoy papers, Archives of American Art)



Living room of one of the apartments, 1938
 (photo by Julius Shulman, courtesy of **Manola Court**)



Interior of Herman Sachs' apartment. Batik wall hanging, area rugs and decorative objects by Sachs, furniture by R.M. Schindler
 (courtesy of Stephen Clauser, handler of the Giovanni "Johnnie" Napolitano Estate)



Interior of Herman Sachs' bachelor apartment at 1811 Edgecliff Drive. Batik wall hanging, area rugs and decorative objects by Sachs, furniture by R.M. Schindler
 (courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library)



Herman Sachs in his living room, seated on a Schindler-designed sofa next to a Schindler-designed end table (courtesy of **Stephen Clauser/Manola Court**)



Herman Sachs (far left), Betty Katz (center, facing camera) and Alexander "Brandy" Brandner (to her left) at a Thanksgiving dinner at Schindler's Kings Road residence, 1923 (photo by Schindler, courtesy of **UC Santa Barbara**)



Herman Sachs in front of one of his batik wall hangings, 1919 (photo by Jane Reece, courtesy of **The Soul Unbound: The Photography of Jane Reece**)

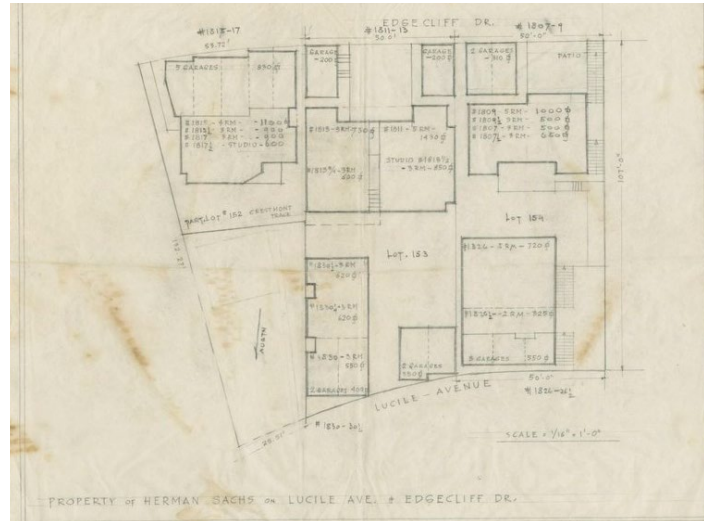


Betty Katz circa 1920 (photo by Edward Weston, courtesy of the **Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents**)



R.M. Schindler at Kings Road, holding his son, Mark. Mid-1920s (courtesy of **Manola Court**)

BLUEPRINTS OR FLOOR PLANS



Site plan of the Sachs Apartments
(courtesy of the **Art, Design & Architecture Museum,**
University of California, Santa Barbara)

YOUTUBE RELATED LINK [Revival of Manola Court](#)

WIKIPEDIA [Herman Sachs](#)

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TALES AND TIMELINES

RELEVANT DATE 1926-27

Herman Sachs buys a plot of land between Lucile Avenue and Edgecliffe Drive, and commissions his friend R.M. Schindler to design an apartment complex in which he can live, make art, and entertain his friend, while using the other units as rental properties

early 1930s

Schindler converts the basements of three of the buildings into apartments.

mid 1930s

Sachs purchases the lot adjacent to his property, and hires Schindler to expand the apartment complex.

1939-1940

After a third expansion, the Sachs Apartments are completed.

1940

Following Herman Sach's sudden death of a heart attack, the architect Alexander "Brandy" Brandner and his wife Betty Katz buy the property, living in Sachs's penthouse apartment for three years until their new Brandy-designed house at the end of the street is ready to move in.

1950s

Long-term tenants of the apartment complex, the Woodburys and the Dahlstons, purchase the complex together.

July 2008

The complex is listed for sale for \$3 million.

2013

The complex is sold to Paul Finegold, his wife Gitu Bhavnani, and Elaine Panush.

2015

Finegold and Bhavnani hire architects Tash Rahbar and Scott Strumwasser of Enclosures Architects to update the complex (now known as Manola Court) while honoring Schindler's original vision.

2016

The complex is named a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

2017

Gitu Bhavnani passes away from TEMPI Syndrome, a rare blood disorder. To honor her life, Paul Finegold turns one of the apartments at Manola Court into a short-term rental, with all of the proceeds going toward rare blood-related disorder research.

That same year, multiple long-time tenants (including Schindler expert Judith Sheine) accuse Finegold of harassment, of wrongful eviction, of attempting to turn the complex into a bed and breakfast, and of making alterations to the interiors that are not in line with Schindler's original design.

ANECDOTE ABOUT
THE STRUCTURE

In 1929, a journalist from the *Los Angeles Times* was invited to tour Herman Sachs's apartment and studio for a profile on Sachs and his work. This is how the *Times* described it:

"The observant visitor to [Sachs'] house and studio, built in attractive modern style to the design of R.M. Schindler, may find the cue in the large and varied collection of art objects housed there. This ranges from archaic Egyptian and Chinese ceramics and bronzes, through Indian, primitive Italian and Spanish objects to West African wood carvings and contemporary works. One finds a Cambodian sacred figure beside a fragment of early fresco or Byzantine mosaic, neighbored again by a modern wool tapestry woven to a Sachs design, or one of the artist's own expressive portraits. The interiors and ceilings were painted by the artist, designed to unite the objects among which he lives and which are the source of his own art experiments. For Sachs is an artist deeply interested and learned in technical processes. His collected objects, always fascinating as examples of human expression, have for him a further interest in the varied methods by which they were executed."