Classy City:
Residential Realms of the Bay Region

Richard Walker
Department of Geography
University of California
Berkeley 94720 USA

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The residential areas occupy the largest swath of the built-up portion of cities, and therefore catch the eye of the beholder above all else. Houses, houses, everywhere. Big houses, little houses, apartment houses; sterile new tract houses, picturesque Victorian houses, snug little stucco homes; gargantuan manor houses, houses tucked into leafy hillsides, and clusters of town houses. Such residential zones establish the basic tone of urban life in the metropolis. By looking at residential landscapes around the city, one can begin to capture the character of the place and its people.

We can mark out five residential landscapes in the Bay Area. The oldest is the 19th century Victorian townhouse realm. The most extensive is the vast domain of single-family homes in the suburbia of the 20th century. The grandest is the carefully hidden ostentation of the rich in their estates and manor houses. The most telling for the cultural tone of the region is a middle class suburbia of a peculiar sort: the ecotopian middle landscape. The most vital, yet neglected, realms are the hotel and apartment districts, where life spills out on the streets. More than just an assemblage of buildings and styles, the character of these urban realms reflects the occupants and their class origins, the economics and organization of home-building, and larger social purposes and planning.

All five ecologies have their counterparts in other American cities, but the peculiarities of their form, scale and survival in the Bay Area lends the place a special feeling. This civic landscape springs from the distinctive class, political and cultural nature of the Bay Area -- relatively wealthy, petty bourgeois, bohemian, cosmopolitan, laborist, environmentalist, egalitarian, anti-modern. In three of the realms, an urbanism born of high density and cacophonous diversity runs in counterflow to conventional American suburbia. Yet the low rise suburban landscape is prominent in the region, whether is rich enclaves, middle class subdivisions, or the mass tracts of little homes for working people. Suburbia has been altered over the years to fit a more crowded metropolis, however, and the common people's landscape is in jeopardy today from rising land values.

Of course, the Bay metropole shares in many of the common attributes of American urbanization: crass commercialism, mass home-building, and rampart fringe development. So a look at the Bay Area's residential expansion can help to reveal both some larger strands of city-building practices in the United States. More than this, some of the key elements of 20th century residential building were invented and perfected here, as in southern California. Yet, the texture of the urban area around the Bay has not gone entirely the way of LA. It is, if anything, rather anti-modern in outlook and unable to mount much of a post-modern offensive either. It is massively suburbanized, yet its heart was never cut out despite violent assaults. Urbanity -- that elusive combination of density, public life, cosmopolitan mixing, and free expression -- is a key term for unlocking the Bay Area's geography.
**Victorian Order on the Land**

The visual quality for which San Francisco is most famous is provide by the Victorian houses marching cheek-by-jowl up and down the city’s hills, delighting the eye with decorative excess and a puckered streetscape of bay windows. The old city of San Francisco is indelibly marked by its legacy of Victorian homes, some 10,000 in number, lying in a grand arc around the City’s burn-out core of 1906, the date when the earth shook and Victorian building came to an abrupt end. The self-conscious urbanity of the late 19th century is vital to San Francisco's feeling of being a true city. This effect is achieved at a scale rarely over three stories high, showing that a vigorous urbanism does not require the density of Manhattan.

Now regarded as quaint and charming, the Victorian townscape came into being as a full-blown project of modernization by a newly-arrived bourgeoisie seeking to impose their order upon an untamed city. The old San Francisco beloved of visitors is not an organic form of a simpler past, but was thrown up in one titanic thirty-year spasm of capitalist property development that erased most of the earlier terrain of the Gold Rush city. In its early years San Francisco was a jumble of plain wooden buildings, mostly unpainted, with plain facades. The cheapness of timber and the haste of construction gave this Instant City the feel of a "woodyard of unusual extent", according to Robert Louis Stevenson. As much of the little peninsula was treeless and windswept, the overall effect closer to a mining camp than a great city. Almost no trace of that era remains, a result that is as much intention as accident of time, rising land values and natural disaster.

San Francisco of the 1850s and 1860s was too raw, too unruly and too libertine for the burghers who amassed fortunes from mining and mercantile trade. An offshoot of American capitalism, which turned its gold and silver into specie, California was a place where young men (most of them solidly petit bourgeois) could escape from the strictures of family, propriety and property, and could revel in a rough frontier equality, a pure money economy, and an absent state -- for a few short years. On the other hand, an unruly city of transients, gamblers and fast-living, the political ascendance of the Irish through the Democratic party, and economic implosion after 1855 jeopardized the dominance of the Anglo merchant class. Hence their reactionary eruptions in Vigilantism in 1851 and 1855-57.

Along with the Second Committee of Vigilance came the Van Ness ordinances (backed up by correlate state law) establishing city control over development and property rights. This was hardly accidental. Land titles, subject to wildly conflicting squatters claims, were regularized and a new class of upright property owners emerged from the chaos of primitive accumulation. The new burghers took the streets in another way, installing spatial order through a fully worked-out street grid and lot subdivision pattern imposed on the expanding city in its Western and Southern Additions (platted in 1861). Consolidation of the city and county of San Francisco tightened the grip over so-called outside lands, where claims were settled by 1866 and a full grid mapped onto the remaining territory by 1879. New development followed quickly at the fringe, a residential subdivision that was not yet sub-urban.

As the social order of the young city settled down into a 'proper' class structure after the silver and railroad boom of 1860-73, the bourgeoisie established visual order by installing miles of stately row houses on the model of London terraces. Victorian homes marched over hill and dale from Union Square westward through Hayes Valley, all across the Western Addition and over Buena Vista Heights to the Haight, up Market to Duboce Triangle and Eureka Valley, and out into the Mission and up through Noe Valley. A taste of Hausmann’s Paris could be found in the sumptuous Queen Anne mansions lining broad Van Ness Avenue. Urbanity, not rusticity, was in fashion -- a didactic urbanism that shouted its pretensions from every rooftop, as the nouveaux arrivés clung to civility in the midst of frontier conquest and raw plunder.

Victorian San Francisco came out looking like nowhere else, even though the architectural styles of the time originated in the East. Partly it was the almost exclusive use of wood in place of brick or stone (over 90% of Victorian homes were entirely wood, usually redwood); good stone was not available locally and brick was suspect after the earthquake of 1868. Partly it was wider lots, allowing for more semi-detached homes. But mostly it was the pretensions of the nouveaux arrivés on the naked edge of the continent, who thought nothing of erecting false fronts on their houses to simulate a loftier city and decorating the facades with wild exuberance -- anticipating the Hollywood back lot by a half-century. San
Francisco was the Las Vegas of its time, from its gambling halls of the Gold Rush to the vernacular excesses of the Victorians, and someplace to learn from. This was most apparent in the piles of gabled impertinence on Nob Hill. The post-Civil War Silver Kings and Railroad Barons seized the heights little city of San Francisco in the 1870s, and proceeded to erect some of the most magnificently absurd creations the world has ever seen. The houses of Crocker, Flood, Stanford and the rest were extravagant and vain, with the Hopkins mansion, all gingerbread and turrets, the most notorious of all (poor Mark, the most restrained of the Big Four in person, never got to live in his wife's fantasy before he died). This outburst of vainglory peaked in the 1880s, the prime decade of lordly riches in the 19th century. Nob Hill is not the essence of the Victorian city, however, but something above and even contrary to the rest of the orderly urban landscape being put in place.

Victorian homes also mark the landscape of outlying commercial towns in San Francisco's rural hinterlands around the Bay Area. Central San Jose still has substantial Victorian quarters; Petaluma has a largely intact Victorian core, as does Benicia, and Napa some fine examples of merchant homes. Oakland was the second city of the region -- though only one-tenth the size of San Francisco -- and it, too, still has a wealth of Victorian homes, and Berkeley has considerable numbers around the university and downtown. A smattering of Victorian stores and houses can be found in the little towns of the 19th century, like Los Gatos, Sebastopol, Danville or Hayward. Victorian homes outside San Francisco were all free standing, never row houses, yet by their formality and incongruence with the surrounding rough countryside, they made a statement that these were real towns, not the sticks. And they continue to offer a refreshing counterpoint to all that has followed as these town centers have been swallowed by low-rise suburbia.  

The rows of Victorians of the Western Addition and other 'suburban' districts were thoroughly modern, mass-production houses. There was very little of the architect or the craftsman about these upright boxes. They were built with standard floor plans, pattern-book blueprints, industrially cut wood and nails and balloon-frames. The extravagant facades were all surface decoration, machine-turned pieces selected from catalogues onto which were pasted all the gee-gaws the buyer wished. The interiors were not what anyone today would consider 'modern', however: an entry foyer, long dark hallways with rooms off to one side, even on the first floor, high 12 foot ceilings, few closets, and small kitchens (and occasionally servants rooms behind).

The Victorian city was put up by commercial developers, precursors of the tract-home builders of the 20th century only small. Scores of builder-developers would buy up lots speculatively from subdividers, in groups of five to fifty, then put up a handful of houses and sell quickly. Many houses were still built to order, however. Larger operators also played a part: the Real Estate Associates put up over a thousand homes in the 1870s, while Fernando Nelson topped this with over 4,000 homes in the 1880s and 1890s. If community developers can package and sell an entire "lifestyle" today, so could developers in the 19th century. Sam Bass Warner calls this the "weave of small patterns", but underestates the coherence lent the whole project by the larger framework of capitalist land development and class initiatives taken to establish the terms of civic expansion.  

Stylistically, the Victorian city shows that historicism and eclecticism are nothing new in the urban landscape. Victorian architecture was not one style, but several, which passed in succession: Italianate in the 1870s, Eastlake (Stick) in the 1880s, and Queen Anne in the 1890s -- with bits of Dutch barn and French mansard thrown in. The differences seem as superficial to our eyes as the false fronts they were. Houses of that time are nothing if not a playful pastiche of decorative bric-a-brac -- 'Postmodern' chic seems to have arrived a century too early. Street front variation seems marked today by contrast with what came later in the mass suburban tracts of the mid-20th century, but that variety runs against the main intent of those who framed this scene of urbanity with its repetitive lots and box frame houses. Rather, it is due to the small scale of building (rarely more than five identical houses in a row); gaps in lot sales and infill (with changing styles by decade), and the personalized facades of buyers. On the other hand, these were rarely the 'painted ladies' we envision today, since the palette of colors available in 19th century paints was much more limited and subdued than the psychedelic repainting since the 1960s.
To equate the fever of modernity in American cities with the 20th century International Style in architecture with is to conflate style with the substance of bourgeois modernization. High Modernism is the exception in US cities, little adopted for single-family homes. The bourgeoisie have found solace in fussy parlors, bogus historicism, and preposterous exteriors -- notwithstanding important modern improvements in surface materials, floor plans, utilities and hygienic kitchens and baths. Residential reverie has long rubbed against the grain of utilitarianism in street grids and dollars per front-foot. Post-Modernism is just the revenge of suburbia on the downtown.

Victorian styles went out of fashion by the depression of the 1890s, and were replaced by neo-classical boxes as Oakland and Berkeley became the fastest growing parts of the Bay Area. Rows and rows of these Edwardian homes fronted the new trolley car lines in the East Bay, trying to keep intact the stolid form of urbanity established in the Victorian era despite wide lots that allowed for broader, detached homes, and side entrances. These handsome structures, with their clapboard siding and low relief classical pillars and porticoes, could be built in one or two story models to fit the range of middle class incomes. They are still a noteworthy part of the East Bay landscape, but were overmatched by bungalow and shingle style houses within a few years, as will be seen.

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The Victorian city put so determinedly into place by the local bourgeoisie soon revealed its limitations as a solution to social and natural disorder -- shortcomings that would lay the basis for new forms of suburban housing to gain the upper hand in the 20th century. First, the working class swelled as the city grew, attracted by jobs in construction, manufacturing and longshoring, bringing hoards of immigrants from Ireland, China, Italy and Germany. The zone south of Market street filled to bursting with a warren of workers’ habitations, spilling over into the Mission and Potrero Hill districts to the south. None of this had the ordered look of the bourgeois realms to the north and west, nor the right allegiances. Labor agitation took the city by storm in the 1870s and again at the turn of the century, with the Union Labor Party seizing electoral power for most of the next twenty years.8

Second, it turned out to be difficult to hold the high ground against creeping industrialization, and the general intrusion of denser housing and commerce into residential areas. Rincon Hill was all but abandoned by the burghers as South of Market industry marched southward and new streets were cut through the hill. Nob Hill was not isolated enough, with Chinatown at its doorstep and Union Square on its southern flank.9

Finally, the holocaust of 1906 consumed the stately Victorians as readily as the fires of the 1850s had devoured the untamed woodpile of their day. Turning whole forests into dense stands of two-by-fours relocated the dangers of conflagration from the woods to the city, and nature took its course from there. It did so without regard to class, burning both north and south of Market and leaving but a doughnut ring around what used to be the heart of the city. Seventy-five percent of the housing stock was incinerated, leaving some 10,000 Victorians behind, mostly row houses. Almost all the great mansions perished. On Nob Hill, only the refurbished shell of James’ Floods brownstone mansion remains, as the Pacific Union Club, while the names of the Robber Barons live on in grand hotels like the Fairmount and Mark Hopkins.10

Even though the Victorian landscape was largely erased, it keeps its hold over San Francisco to this day, setting the tone for the city's streetscapes. The grid and lot pattern held firm, with larger replacement buildings occupying multiples of 25- and 30-foot lots, still fronting the street. (Not until the age of urban renewal, when whole blocks became the units of design, was the lot pattern significantly altered). The basic lines of the Victorian facade -- high and narrow, bay windows, and wood, wood, wood -- has remained a mainstay of city house design right to the present. As neo-classical, Mediterranean, shingle and other styles came along, and even the techno-modern lofts of the 1990s, they adapted to the Victorian habit, even as interiors were updated, garages included, and open floor plans adopted. The weight of Victoriana is one reason that High Modernism has had less room to stretch its wings in San Francisco than in Los Angeles.

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In the last twenty years, Victorian houses came back into fashion with a vengeance, as part of the remaking of San Francisco and the inner East Bay. Wherever gentrification takes place, Victorian houses are the first to be targeted. A bright coat of paint can bring a realtor a quick sale or a landlord a higher rent, while a strong dose of sweat-equity can reward an enterprising young homeowner with a sense of luxurious spaciousness and crafted interiors that she could not otherwise afford. In the central districts of San Francisco (Noe-Eureka valleys, the Haight-Cole Valley, Delores Park, Alamo Square, and the upper Fillmore), one finds some of the most thorough-going gentrification of old housing in the country. Gentrification has also targeted Victorian homes in North Oakland, central Berkeley, Point Richmond, San Rafael, Palo Alto, and San Jose. For in-fill developments in the Western Addition, Potrero Hill, and central Oakland, neo-Victorian townhouses came back in the 1980s, as well.11

The attraction of Victorian houses is very much wrapped up with their evocation of 19th century urban vitality and exuberance, not simply a nostalgia for the past. Gentrification was closely associated with the Yuppie wave of the 1970s and 80s, and its conscientious striving after an urban culture in the European manner. The roaring success of Yuppie culture renewed for another generation the long tradition of urbanity among San Francisco's middle and upper classes. The taste for Victorians was born of a confrontation not so much with Modernist aesthetics, as with the distaste for the modern wrecking ball and the leveling of large parts of the City by urban renewal projects and freeways in the 1950s and 1960s. (see Chapter 1)

In this environment of civic rebellion, the historic preservation movement was born. Pictorial essays touting the splendors of Victorian homes and old skyscrapers cultivated a taste for the past, and a Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage was formed in 1971. Local magazines began running articles on rehabbing old homes, and salvage businesses sprang up to save the best bits and pieces of demolished old buildings. The major axes of contention were the Western Addition in San Francisco and West Oakland; and while both districts lost upwards of half their remaining structures to urban clear-cutting, vocal citizens groups saved a great many. These alliances made for strange bedfellows, with the Junior League of San Francisco (women from the best families) working hand-in-hand with Gay activists (key to the reshaping of architectural taste and rehabilitation of old houses) and alongside African-American neighborhood groups (fighting against a thoroughly racist black removal strategy of the civic elites). As a consequence, the political significance was a great deal more radical than one would imagine from the generalization of a commercial "heritage industry" throughout Europe and North America in the 1980s.12

A further contradiction of the preservation and gentrification movements is that they assisted in the annihilation of working class urban culture, pricing most workers out the urban core. Obscure little South Park (near the foot of the Bay Bridge), once a refuge for a small black residential block, is now a popular eating spot for the denizens of Virtual Valley, the new hot spot for multimedia electronics and computer magazine publishers. As always, financiers and landowners grew rich on the unearned increment between the price of working class neighborhoods and the prices high-income people can pay for their taste of urbanism. The ultimate irony is the reappearance of Victorian-style townhouses in the Western Addition, where exposed gaps of land stood barren for almost forty years after the removal of thousands of poor people’s homes by the bulldozers of the 1960s.

Victoriana has come back to the suburbs, as well. Today's post-modern designers play the trick of pirating the city for the images of an urbane suburbia. Half-circle window lights, a suggestion of verticality, and meaningless dormers sprout like mung beans in the tracts of the 1980s. Neo-Victorians give the buyer a taste of old San Francisco in faceless places like Hercules, Milpitas or Walnut Creek. This is, in part, a degenerate post-modernism -- the contented marriage of mass production with prim pilasters and fenestration -- and another small indicator of the failure of urbanity in America. Yet it is also a sign of the urbane attempting, against all the odds, to be reborn in the increasingly dense Edge Cities of the late 20th century, searching for a history that ties its bloodline to the great cities of the past.13
Estates of the Art

The wealthy are different from you and me: they have more money and they use more space. The houses of the very rich are notable for their size and grandeur, and often for the expanse of the grounds. This is the landscape of estates, an essential part of the urban terrain but not always the most visible. While some of the rich and powerful like to show their muscle by erecting showplaces on urban promontories, mostly they prefer their ostentation on the sly, to be shown only to others of their class. So they retreat to exurban hideaways tucked into mountainsides or guarded by solid gates, in places like Atherton and Ross, Woodside and Blackhawk, Mayacamas and Sonoma mountains.

The estate landscape has gone through several metamorphoses in both scale and style of houses, and in acreage and garden fashions. Architecture and landscaping are indexes of how the upper classes have related to the land and the social order of California, and are, like the Victorian city, bourgeois class projects par excellence. The first is the age of large landholdings and Victorian delirium, running from 1865 through the Depression of the 1890s. The second, up to the Stock Market Crash of 1929, is marked by Bourgeois Classicism and the search for order on the land. The third, from the Great Depression through the 1960s, is the epoch of Modernism, showing real restraint across smaller and more subtle spaces of house and garden. The latest era, beginning about 1980, might be called the Revenge of the Rich, in which bloated houses have run architectural riot, while landscaping, ironically, have become more in tune with California geography.

At the same time as they seized Nob Hill, San Francisco's leading capitalists were busy erecting mansions outside the city. One house has never been enough for the truly rich. The premier venue for country estates was the Peninsula. The first to arrive, in the 1860s, were Faxon Atherton, W.E. Barron, Antoine Borel, Alvinza Hayward and William Howard of the pre-Comstock generation. Many more followed in the 1870s and 80s. Around what is now San Mateo, there was Darius Mills' 'Millbrae', Ansel Easton, Joseph Poett, Charles Clark and John Parrott, along with Hayward and Borel. Near toRalston's 'Belmont' were Simon Mezes and Horace Hawes. Further south in Menlo Park, Atherton's "Valparaiso Park" was joined by Thomas Selby's "Almendral", Milton Lapham's 'Thurlow Lodge' (replacing Barron's burned home; Barron moved to Mayfield), James Flood's 'Linden Towers' (purchased later by Timothy Hopkins), James Watkins' "Fair Oaks", and Joseph Donohoe's "Holmgrove". Leland Stanford's horse farm lay to the south, past the end of the railroad line. Bucolic Woodside had Edgar Preston's 'Montebello', followed by John Hooper and James Folger; Andrew Halladie went into Portola Valley.

Most of these estates were very large. They featured great houses in flamboyant Victorian styles, surrounded by expanses of 500 acres or more (Stanford's was 10,000). These were working landscapes that reflected the agricultural explosion in the Bay Area: wheat fields, orchards, vineyards, cattle or dairies (see Chapter 5). Timothy Hopkins even turned his estate into a commercial nursery. Most had large gardens near the house in the English manner, as interpreted by the American Andrew Jackson Downing. These had the telltale expanses of lawn and picturesque grouping of trees that evoked England's green and pleasant land, along with singular plantings of specimen trees characteristic of the Imperial Age of collecting from around the world.

What distinguished California's estates, however, was the frenzy to plant up the land and the sheer variety of species. The open savannas of oak and grass were engulfed by millions of plantation trees, especially Australian eucalyptus and Monterey pines, to clothe the rude nakedness of the land. Meanwhile, legions of exotic plants were tried, including palms and Araucaria, yuccas and dracaenas, cypress and pines, aloes and cacti. Large specimens of these still mark the spots where Victorian manor houses once stood. These gardens were mostly the work of nurserymen and horticulturalists, not trained designers; the only memorable gardener of the age was John McLaren, brought from Scotland to Howard's El Cerrito in 1873 and the chief of Golden Gate Park from 1890 to 1943.

The exurban estates of the 19th century were not a creation of style, pretense and imagination alone. The new class of robber barons were recycling their money capital back into landed property, much in the fashion of the English merchants of the 18th century who paid for the first designed Pleasure Grounds.
And they followed the first railway lines built out from San Francisco by Peter Donahue in order to keep his Union Iron Works busy and to dispose of his own surplus capital (as well as the ferries of Southern Pacific heading across the Bay). The San Jose-San Francisco (sic) was the first one completed, in 1864. The bankers, lawyers and industrialists who owned the great estates usually installed the wife, children and servants at a safe distance, kept a hotel room in the City, and commuted on weekends. Although Leland Stanford never built more than a huge barn (now engulfed by the Stanford Shopping Center), the aura of the place has been preserved in Stanford University's sense of being a world apart, and the campus is still popularly referred to as 'the farm'.

Of the great Peninsula houses, only Ralston's remains, as part of the College of Notre Dame. The others were torn down (or burned in suspicious fires) to make way for later developments, the fantasies giving way to practical matters of further money-making on real estate. Incongruous settings of palms and monkey-puzzle trees bear mute witness to estates long since demolished for housing tracts. The same fate befell many of the great estates elsewhere around the Bay. The disappearance of her banker father's Victorian estate home in Oakland prompted Gertrude Stein, on a visit from Paris, to pen the infamous lines, "There was no more there, there" -- not a reference to Oakland at all, but to the gods of property who had devoured her childhood memories.

The Peninsula was the premier estate precinct but by no means the only one. San Jose was a farming center in this era, but played host to the most astonishing estate of all: Winchester House. This Victorian mansion stretches for an unbelievable 160 rooms across several acres. It was the home of an heir to the Winchester rifle fortune who feared that the ghosts of all those killed by her family's rifles in the settlement of the West would return to wreak vengeance unless she kept on building. In a funny way, it worked, keeping her honorable madness in check for almost forty years. It still captivates visitors as a tribute to the kind of inherited eccentricity rare outside the English aristocracy.

Oakland's early grandees also built Gothic and Victorian mansions on their extensive holdings, often not much more than a stone's throw from what was still a small town. In the 1860s and 1870s James DeFremery, Domenico Ghirardelli and George Pardee, Sr. built to the west, James Moffitt, J. Mora Moss, and George Hume to the north, as horse car lines were extended toward the Olmsted-designed Mountain View Cemetery. Napoleon Bonaparte Burns brought his slaves and built the first great house in Berkeley along Cordonices Creek during the Civil War. These pioneers were soon joined by a phalanx of escapees from the cold winds of San Francisco, commuting by ferry to Oakland and Alameda's sunny shores. Lumber shipping magnate Charles Heywood built in West Berkeley (Oceanview); this house still stands, as do those of DeFremery, Moss, and Pardee in Oakland city parks. The Burns house was destroyed in 1984 by a suspicious fire. [Borax Smith the last of the type? That would be c 1900] With expansion of ferry service after the Civil War, the East Bay also drew San Francisco capitalists. Lucius Booth of the Central Pacific and Isaac Requa of the Comstock built their mansions, Hazelwood and The Highlands, in the hills of Piedmont behind Oakland. Alameda city had such a concentration of commuter estates, it came to be known as the Gold Coast -- still the most bountiful collection of large, free-standing Victorian homes in the Bay Area.

Up in Marin, a few estates were established in the 1870s, after the North Pacific Coast Railroad came in. San Rafael was a cow town until William Coleman, the "Lion of the Vigilantes", arrived in 1871, bought 1100 acres for his own estate and began subdividing. He attracted the Gersgles and the Slosses of the Alaska Commercial Company, and a few others. Albert Kent arrived from Chicago in the same year, bought up an old rancho on the slopes of Tamalpais, and put up his Kentfield estate in the Ross Valley. But most of Marin's great estates were still far in the future. [check against Spitz and Body at Bancroft]

The rush of investment in Sonoma and Napa vineyards in the 1880s brought with it the first mansions and rural cottages for wealthy San Franciscans. Tiburcio Parrot, descendent of the city's leading family of the 1850s, built an estate on Spring Mountain in the Napa Valley. Gustave Niebaum, a Finnish sea rover named Niebaum (another who made millions off seal pelts as a partner in the Alaska Commercial Company) changed his name and settled down to a life of landlocked gentility at Inglenook. Today Stag’s Leap Winery was the home of the Chase family, transplanted from Chicago. Robert Louis Stevenson joined the exodus to Napa, where he wrote The Silverado Squatters, and so did asthmatic Ambrose Bierce. Jack London tried to recapitulate this manorial fantasy at Wolf House in the Valley of the Moon in the 1910s, but history repeated itself as farce and tragedy: alcoholic Jack, once a Siren of
Socialism, was ruined when one of the construction workers burnt down the just-finished house in a fit of pique over the meanness of the wages.²⁴

Wolf House belongs to the next generation of great homes and estates, falling between the 1890s and the 1920s. After a sharp Depression 1893-96, there was a long wave of economic expansion finishing up with a decade of roaring aggrandizement of wealth in the hands of the few. Although the Bay Area was surpassed by Southern California in this era -- and by the swath of great estates from Pasadena to Santa Barbara -- it was nevertheless a good time to be rich.²⁵ The 20th century estate landscape took on a very different look and geography from the Victorian era, however. Edwardian tastes turned toward the Mediterranean, as a new cohort of architects drew up elegant Italianate or Beaux Arts designs, and formal landscaped gardens replaced agrarian plantations. Great homes were plentiful, though usually on smaller acreage than before, and the numbers of wealthy had expanded sufficiently to support whole colonies of grand houses. A new class of property developers seized on the opportunity to make money by providing suburban townships exclusively for such homes.

In San Francisco, the emplacements of the rich took off westward from Nob Hill across Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights, with their magnificent views of the Bay and the Golden Gate, and out to the Cliff House on the ocean. In seizing the high ground, the local haute bourgeoisie created one of the finest examples of aristocratic urbanity in America, only a notch below Fifth Avenue in New York and Michigan Avenue in Chicago. And this one has survived as no other; where Crockers, Hobarts and Spreckels once cavorted, Haases and Gettys still hold court, along with nouveau riches like writer Danielle Steele -- though some old beauties, like Claus Spreckels' classical palace by Lafayette Park, are looking a bit withered today. The San Francisco elite never abandoned their city the way so many others across the country did in the post-World War II era. The seasonal migration back to the City for the Opera and other delights is still as regular as the passage of swallows through San Juan Capistrano.²⁶

The new wave of country estates came with elegant place names and were backed by large fortunes -- mostly local money but spiced by Chicago fortunes like the Pullmans (whose first sleeping car had been sold to Leland Stanford). They fitted into secluded nooks around the region, but especially on the Peninsula. Leading examples were Charles Baldwin's Beaulieu in Cupertino (1890), William Bourn's Filoli overlooking Crystal Springs reservoir (1910), James Phelan's Villa Montalvo in Saratoga (1912), August Shilling's Broad Oak in Woodside (1914), and Frederick Sharon's Sharon Heights (1906) nearby. In Hillsborough, William Crocker led the way with The Oaks (1895), followed by New Place (1907) after the Quake. Harriet Pullman was close behind with Crossways (1897) and the gargantuan Carolands on Black Mountain (1913). Other palaces were Eugene de Sabla's El Cerrito (1907), Templeton Crocker's Uplands (1897), and George Newhall's La Dolphine (1916). Outside the Peninsula, noteworthy estates were Ralston White's Garden of Allah in Mill Valley (1916), Phoebe Hearst's Hacienda del Pozo de Verona (1895) in Pleasanton, John Spring's mansion atop the Berkeley hills (1912), Anson Blake's house in Kensington (1922), the Alexander Dunsamuir-Isais Hellman house in Oakland's hills (1899) and, in Piedmont, homes of William E. Sharon, Wallace Alexander, and Frank Havens' Wildwood (c.1900). Many of these survive, but rarely in private hands (Carolands, Spring Mansion); usually they passed into the hands of churches (Garden of Allah), universities and schools (Blake House, Beaulieu, Spring Mansion), country clubs (The Oaks), parks (Dunsamuir House, Villa Montalvo, Filoli) and other institutions.²⁷

In the field of architecture, a burst of professional creativity took place in the Bay Area with the arrival of a handful of exceptional talents in the 1890s: Willis Polk, A.C. Schweinfurth, A. Page Brown, Ernest Coxhead, and Bernard Maybeck. They were joined after 1900 by Julia Morgan, John Hudson Thomas and John Galen Howard, among others. This brilliant circle was a part of the new wave of professional architecture coming out of Paris' Ecole des Beaux Arts, new schools of professional design in the US, and the New York firm of McKim, Mead and White. Brown got things rolling when he relocated from New York (next door to McKim, Mead) and brought Polk with him. Polk became the most sought after architects, designing such notable houses as Beaulieu, New Place and Filoli. Morgan was equally prolific but ended up bogged down for twenty years at San Simeon by Hearst's megalomania.²⁸
The new architects rejected what they regarded as the falsity and incoherence of Victorian architecture in favor of a studied simplicity and integrity of design -- a thoroughly Modern outlook. They favored classical revivals of 'Mediterranean' styles, a loose assemblage of Italian Renaissance, Spanish-Moorish, and Roman-Beaux Arts. California's grandees were not just emulating the European aristocracy but trying to differentiate themselves from those of Newport, the North Shore and the Philadelphia Mainline, who favored English Georgian, Palladian, and Jeffersonian styles. Californians had suddenly rediscovered their links to Mediterranean civilization through the Spanish conquest. The Mythos of the Missions took Southern California by storm at the turn of the century, giving that region its own identity against San Francisco's favored fantasies of the Pioneers and Argonauts. Ironically, Bay Area architects created the Mission style but abandoned by the early 1900s. All the leading architects also worked in the Arts and Crafts genre, though this would show up less in the great estates than in smaller houses (see next section). Exceptions were Coxhead's Pacific Heights homes (1890s), Havens' Indian-themed Wildwood, Sharon Heights, and Maybeck's rustic Wyntoon (1902), the Hearst's rural retreat on the McCloud River.

The early 20th century ushered in a landscape of Mediterranean gardens, as well. These were inspired by the grounds of Italian renaissance country houses, French baroque chateaux, Roman villas, and Persian and Moorish palaces that rich Californians had seen on their travels to Europe and the Middle East. The unifying theme was formality in the layout of pathways, fountains, beds, and trees, and a spare contrast to the "floral prodigality" of the Victorian era. But it did not mean working with native plants or topography to any significant degree, as yet. "These reconstructions were achieved in defiance of the local landscape," as garden historian David Streetfield remarks. Furthermore, lush look of English gardens never lost its appeal in the Bay Area, and drifts of trees, grass and flower beds could often be found just beyond the stiff and scholarly formal gardens, and the ubiquitous plantings of eucalypts and pines beyond that. To add to the ménage, every large estate seemed to need a Japanese Tea Garden after the sensation created by the one at the Midwinter Exposition of 1894 in Golden Gate Park (created by George Turner Marsh).

As contemporary observer Winifred Dobyns put it so well: "Overnight, palaces and villas seem to spring into being on barren hills and in wooded canyons. within a short year a garden will blossom where yesterday only greasewood and scrub oak clothed the ground. Wealth and art together have been employed to lay out many of California's gardens. This new upper class project gave work to the first cohort of professional landscape architects in the state, and the 1920s were something of a golden age for the young profession. Leading lights in the Bay Area were Bruce Porter, who worked with Polk on the Italianate gardens at New Place and designed the still-extent gardens at Filoli, and Lewis Hobart, who designed the French garden at La Dolphine. Harriett Pullman went all out at Carolans when she hired Achille Duchene, the greatest French landscapist since Le Notre, and designer of gardens for the Vanderbilts; but his 500 acre plan was never realized and Polk had to oversee the gardens as well as the house construction. John McClaren put in formal English gardens at Villa Montalvo, Oakvale (Dunsuir House) and elsewhere. These men were still largely self-trained, however, since landscaping lagged architecture by a generation setting up formal training (Berkeley established a department of Landscape Design in 1913).

Besides the individual great estates, a new genre of planned suburbs for the wealthy appeared at Burlingame Park (Hillsborough), Belvedere and Mill Valley by the turn of the last century. In addition, Piedmont and Atherton were consolidated as jurisdictions of the rich. To this list of enclaves must be added a handful of luxury developments within the boundaries of existing cities: Claremont in Berkeley and the Uplands in Oakland, and St. Francis Wood, Presidio Terrace and Forest Hill in San Francisco. All these sites collectively embraced and promoted the class ambitions of the bourgeoisie, while turning a handsome profit for their developers.

Burlingame Park was conceived by Francis Newlands, the son-in-law of William Sharon (who had taken over the property from the late Billy Ralston and Anson Burlingame). The first promotional 'cottages', designed by A. Page Brown, were sold in the early 1890s. This coincided with the founding of the Burlingame Country Club whose members included members of Howard, Parrott, Crocker, Tobin and Baldwin families -- the pinnacle of San Francisco business and society. William Crocker gave the new suburb the needed social seal of approval by building The Oaks, and a coven of mansions sprang up after 1900. Lovell White, another former partner of Ralston's, and Joseph Eastman were the promoters behind the founding of Mill Valley in 1889, where the Whites built their country home, The Arches. [see also Spitz on Mill Valley) [Tevises and Crockers at Belvedere, but who financed it?]
In the East Bay, the Claremont district and The Uplands were laid out side by side at the base of the hills. They were the work of Duncan McDuffie and of the team of Frank Havens and Francis Marion Smith. Smith, like Newlands, was already wealthy (from Borax mining), and while McDuffie had parlayed local real estate into his own substantial fortune. Smith and Havens would build most of the elite housing in Oakland (Trestle Glen, Park View, etc), while McDuffie went on to build Northbrae and Cragmont in North Berkeley. San Francisco was on the grid, yet a few pieces of hillside real estate were available for unitary developments. The largest was McDuffies' St. Francis Wood on the western flank of Twin Peaks in 1912. Forest Hill, also on Twin Peaks, and Presidio Terrace, just south of the Presidio, were other large planned subdivisions in the city -- the former by xxxx and the latter by Fernand Nelson (formerly a Victorian builder).  

These developments followed in the tradition of the Romantic Suburb, whose roots go back to Andrew Jackson Downing's sketches, Alexander Jackson Davis' Llewellyn Park (1857), and Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Riverside (1869). These men meant to replace the ubiquitous American grid and the indiscriminate selling of individual lots in the typical urban plat with the carefully contoured lines of a unified subdivision. Natural topography, creeks and woodlands were all carefully preserved in their naturalistic plans. They typically came with blareyish names meant to evoke woods, dales, glens, gardens and parks. Robert Fishman has aptly called these "bourgeois utopias."  

Such grandiose developments only came into their own at the end of the century, by which time almost every American city had one. To be realized, the Romantic Suburb required a new breed of developer who could work up a large parcel of outlying land into a prescribed living environment, with transport access, a coherent design, and the new utilities (electricity, telephones and gas), and who could sell parcels and provide houses in conjunction with builders and real estate agents. The developers typically owned realty companies, as in the cases of the Sharon Estate Company, Belvedere Land Company, Mason-McDuffie, and Smith and Havens' Realty Syndicate. Michael O'Shaughnessy was the favored engineer-planner of the local capitalists (later to design the Hetch Hetchy system), who laid out Burlingame Park, Mill Valley and Belvedere. But Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. did the layout for St. Francis Wood and the Claremont district. Railroads, trolleys, tunnels and ferries brought these outliers within easier commuting distance (transit links were often purpose-built as part of the same investment package, as with the Key System's Claremont line or the spur of the Northern Pacific to Mill Valley). To top it off, recreational destinations, such as the magnificent Claremont Hotel, Piedmont Club House and Mt. Tam railway, were built to lure the well-to-do into the promoters clutches.

Not all elite suburbs were so thoroughly planned. Atherton (Fair Oaks) and Menlo Park evolved organically through the breakup of large estates. As Elizabeth Burns argues, subdividing was controlled by residents owning large tracts of land rather than by outside developers. In this way the class character of the place could be handed down from the early estates -- even as the families themselves often eagerly sold off their property and even tore down the great house to make more money (only Fair Oaks, of Atherton's great houses, is left). Piedmont is a hybrid case, closer to the center and more intensely coveted by developers, yet able to preserve its social standing. In 1868, the Piedmont Land and Water Company was organized by a group of East Bay investors, who built the Piedmont Hotel to promote the local white sulphur springs and their real estate; but neither the capital nor housing demand yet existed that could ignite the scheme. Toward the end of the century, with Oakland booming, various promoters laid cable and trolley tracks out toward Piedmont, and subdividers, including Frank Havens, William Dingee and scions of the great estates, carved up large pieces of property (Requa, Alexander, Sharon, etc.) into a prestige home lots.  

Crucially, wealthy residents could draw their own boundaries. Mill Valley incorporated in 19xx, Belvedere in 1896, and Ross in 1908. As Oakland began aggressively annexing everything around, the Piedmont elite pulled themselves together and got a city charter from the state in 1906. Surrounded completely by Oakland, Piedmont is one of the most bizarre cases of spatial exclusion in any American city. Atherton incorporated in 1923 to hold off Menlo Park, which was hoping to annex the Fair Oaks district in its own incorporation (the latter's social standing had fallen, however, from the impact of a huge army camp put there during World War I). This hiving off of suburban jurisdictions, led by the anxious elites of the early 20th century, would eventually leave central cities across the country gasping inside a noose of independent suburbs. Governmental fragmentation in American cities is often defended as a model of 'grass roots democracy', but it was meant to lock social inequality into place, and does so to this
Even so, some upper class bastions did not need to bother with incorporation, because their geographic isolation was sufficient to do the deed. Marin's Kentfield nestles safely beneath Mt. Tam and Kensington sits above it all in the East Bay hills.

Certain legal innovations in land use control were also needed to secure the collective class project. Control of house and yard standards and exclusion of discordant uses was implemented, first, through deed restrictions and, later, through zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. California led the nation in these new forms of regulation. Every integrated development came with racial covenants and other deed restrictions from the 1890s onward, and the first exclusionary zoning laws in the country were adopted in the 1880s by Modesto and San Francisco (to rid Anglo zones of Chinese). Subdivision maps were first required in California in 1893 and the regulations upgraded again in 1907, 1915 and in the 1920s. Los Angeles introduced the nation's first comprehensive zoning act in 1908 (upgraded in 1915), while Berkeley's McDuffie came up at the same time with the idea of single-use and large-lot zoning to confine commercial activities to designated areas and restrain further subdivision of exclusive domains. These ideas became the norm throughout the United States between the World Wars.  

If the gingerbread palaces of the Nob Hills nabobs were a passing fancy on the landscape. Soon all these practices -- planned suburbs, autonomous jurisdictions, zoning and planning acts -- filtered down to the wide host of new subdivisions for the middle classes built in huge numbers in the 1910s and 20s. Then the great building boom came crashing down in 1929, along with the stock market and inflated wealth of the grandees (which had reached its 20th century apogee). The newly adopted federal income taxes (ratcheted up during the New Deal) further put an end to the second era of Great Estates. During the 1930s, everything would change again -- except the basic economic and class structure of American capitalism.

The 1930s to the 1960s was the era of High Modernism in city landscapes and more tasteful moderation along the byways of the rich. The new styles and habits of building would be set in the Depression decade, then flourish in the vast urban expansion of the postwar Golden Age. The reduction of income inequality curbed the excesses of the bourgeoisie, even as high profitability and low interest rates brought unprecedented prosperity to builders and developers. The new houses of the rich became less clearly distinguishable from those of the upper middle class -- except that they continued to be custom built, better appointed and professionally landscaped. But the typical custom house of the late 1940s was no more than 1500 square feet -- what Gardner Dailey called the 'Large-Small House'.  

Older mansions could be recycled, of course, but many fell to the wrecker's ball and the subdividers. Crucially, the leading enclaves of the well-to-do had been set in stone, and many more handsome homes could be packed into the well-defended confines.

After the Second World War, towns like Hillsborough, Piedmont, and Ross continued to fill up with gracious homes of the prosperous, as did the higher realms of the North Berkeley and Oakland hills. Some places that had barely existed before, such as Portola Valley, Los Altos Hills, Tiburon, Kensington, Orinda and Lafayette, quietly joined the ranks of prestige addresses. Subdivision of estates took place rapidly after the Second World War in Atherton, Woodside, Kentfield and Portola Valley, for example; in the outlying areas, such as Alamo or Los Altos, agricultural orchards or ranches were carved up by developers. Most of these newer elite towns soon incorporated: Woodside in 1957, Portola Valley 1964, Tiburon 1964, Orinda 1985.

The leading figures of the mid-century capitalist class in the Bay Area were not noted for ostentatious estates. A.P. Giannini was tucked demurely into Hillsborough (Bing Crosby made more of a splash), David Packard in Los Altos Hills, Henry Kaiser in Orinda, and Stephen Bechtel in Lafayette (or vice versa). The descendents of the robber barons, such as the Chabots, Moffits and Ghirardellis still living in Piedmont, contented themselves with smaller homes and the hefty returns from carving up the family patrimony (more was held elsewhere around the state, in most cases). Indeed, during the era of High Modernism the landscapes of estates and of the small house came closer together than the ever had before -- or would again.

A clear break occurred in architectural styles in the 1930s, with a turn toward the self-proclaimed Modern among many designers. Some very fine examples of Modernist domestic architecture can be found in the
Bay Area, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Hanna House at Stanford (1951), John Dinwiddie's Roos House in San Francisco (1938), or John Funk's own house in Lafayette (1948). These had the requisite clean geometry, open floor plans, large windows, flat roofs and large kitchens of the Bauhaus approach coming out of Germany and Southern California. Today, one can still see the appeal of the Modern houses' lightness of being, luminous spaces, and general convenience compared to anything before. A group of Bay Area architects, led by William Wurster, Gardner Dailey, Mario Corbett and Joe Esherick, married the International Style to an older regional tradition of redwood and rusticity to come up with a distinctive brand of Modernism. Work was so plentiful in the immediately postwar years that their offices spawned coveys of young practitioners, just as the ateliers of Brown and Polk had before them.

Fittingly, the Modern houses of the wealthy adopted a lower profile, commonly single story construction without basement or attic. The most popular variant of their designs became the ubiquitous California Ranch House, typically with a long footprint, overhanging veranda, and low-pitch shingle roof. These became the characteristic houses of Los Altos Hills, Portola Valley, and Orinda, and filled up most of the subdivided estate lands of Atherton and Hillsborough, as well; they can even be found peppered all through Palo Alto, Mill Valley or the Berkeley Hills. From 1930 to 1960, high and middle class housing overlapped considerably, and architects would work with developers on whole subdivisions as often as on custom-built houses. Then upper tier houses became growing again in size in the mid-1950s (pushing against the limits of the Bay Area Tradition of simplicity), although they still kept to the single story plan until the International Style faded. A new verticality arrived in the 1960s, but even when they went upward, it was mostly to open interior volume and bring in more light.

Crucial to this age was the idea of 'outdoor living' and the unity of house and garden. California's climate effortlessly met the requisites of Modernist theory. Plate glass and aluminum sliding doors put the outdoors within easy reach. Appliances meant the end of backyard clothes lines, recreation was in fashion and the barbecue ubiquitous. On flat terrain, the concrete slab floor might literally flow right into the outdoor terrace. On hillsides -- where more and more of the well-to-do were moving to find space, views and a taste of the country (aided by the ever-present automobile) -- site selection, house design, and plate glass windows brought the Bay and hillside view into focus. The redwood deck became the universal declaration of freedom from confinement and the most telling signifier of Bay Area architecture (decks would be tacked onto everything and anything by the 1960s).

Garden fashions changed dramatically, too. The central figure in the Modern moment in landscaping was Thomas Church, whose great achievement was to abandon the central axis of the classical garden but not all formality, and to introduce multiple angles, levels and views into gardens of modest scope. He loved curving features and built the first kidney-shaped swimming pool at the Donnell House, El Movillero (1948), outside Sonoma. Floral effusion was suppressed in favor of restrained greenery, and materials were emphasized in steps, terraces and redwood decking. Living outdoors did not, for Church, imply either rusticity nor lack of elegance. But he did wish an integrated sense of the house and the garden environment, a revolutionary idea at the time.

The other leading designers of the day were Garrett Eckbo, Robert Royston, Douglas Bayliss and Lawrence Halprin. Church's office served as the launching pad from which almost all the others got their start, and all worked closely with the leading Bay Area Modern architects. The landscape designers were influenced, in their youth, by Christopher Tunnard and wrote manifestoes in the 1950s that were halfway between the avant garde and American self-help manuals. The fame of this group made the Bay Area the center of landscape design for the country. Eckbo carried the modern style into Southern California, which nonetheless remain more inclined toward effusive planting of exotics.

While marking the Bay Area residential landscape indelibly, the restrained aesthetics and social conscience of the Modernists did not outlast the economics of the Golden Age of postwar America. Even in the long boom of the 1960s, the market for custom homes dried up as merchant builders moved upscale and changing economics drove housing toward greater density and more condominiums. Wealthy Russian Hill and Pacific Heights both were hit by a flight of tall apartment buildings, before the anti-high rise movement stopped further excesses. Then building came to a halt again in the deep crisis of the early 1970s. When it recovered, times had changed again. The Reagan tax cuts and the stock market recovery of the 1980s generated a Doppler shift in the distribution of income and wealth and a new coloration to the high end of the housing market,
By the turn of the millennium, the pretensions of fast money and great wealth were again widely on display in the geography of the Bay Area. The first clear indication of the shift was to be found at Blackhawk, a planned and gated community on the flank of Mt. Diablo. Blackhawk features an effusion of revivalist, or post-Modern, styles, from neo-Victorian to neo-Mission. But history returned as farce, in a combination of 'Monster' scaling (huge footprints on small lots), overstatement (huge porticoes, pilasters, lobbies and bathrooms), and cheap construction (spray stucco, chipboard, plastic roof tiles). The principal architect of such homes, Douglas Dahlin, has the Dantesque fate of having to live in one. Fronting the residential area is an upscale shopping mall that prefigured the new Las Vegas: neo-classical shops along a sinuous waterway, in flagrant disregard for the intense summer heat and water shortages of the inland location. The residents of Blackhawk are mostly *nouveaux arrivées*, like John Madden the sports commentator. The billionaire developer, Walter Behrens, lives in a palatial spread on a nearby hilltop -- along strict Modernist lines.44

But the really big money still settles on the West Side of the Bay -- the hills of the Peninsula and Marin -- or up to the North Bay wine country. The Peninsula has been reconfigured by the techno-grandees of Silicon Valley, where electrons turn to gold in the New Alchemy of micro circuitry. The magnates of the information age still follow closely the larger pattern of the old money from San Francisco that first sought the comforts of the foothills to the west, but there has been a decided shift southward. The newest multimillionaires are to be found in the Mid-Peninsula haunts of Woodside, Portola Valley, Los Altos Hills, and Palo Alto, which equal or exceed the older bastions of wealth in Atherton and Hillsborough. House values were driven to absurd heights by an unprecedented stock bubble (the NASDAQ technology stock index rose from 2000 to 5000 from 1997 to 1999, injecting roughly $2 trillion into the Silicon Bay economy, then collapsed back to 2000); the median home price in these prime communities soared to over $1 and $2 million.

Meanwhile, self-confident billionaires like Larry Ellison are once more indulging their vast riches on grandiose estates. Ellison's fantasy is Japanese, on both his Woodside manor and his outlying estate in Oregon, which has a garden on the scale of Tokyo's Imperial Palace. [What's it called? ask Ron Hermann] While a few of the Silicon Capitalists opt for Techno-Modern homes, most prefer the traditional comforts of wood and stone, Craftsman design elements, or post-Modern classicism -- but with a full complement of high tech wiring, computer controls, and security systems. The new estates harken back to the golden days before the income tax -- although land prices put a limit on size.

Just behind the custom homes are the Estate Tracts of the well-heeled, such as Silver Creek, a country club development on the south side of San Jose, or the Evergreen district in the hills to the east or the Almaden district to the south. All have that Blackhawk feel, if not as opulent. [need more here].....xxxxxxx...

A third route to the large house is to transform older bungalows into Monster Houses in places like Menlo Park and Los Altos Hills. This has triggered an uproar of protest from neighbors fearful of the loss of the snug feel and design heritage of their towns. And not without reason, because the new technocrats, often coming from overseas, have not adopted the culture of historic preservation and regard Victorian and craftsman buildings as inconvenient and old-fashioned. Palo Alto was split down the middle in the late 1990s by ballot initiatives to slap a moratorium on house demolitions; significantly, the measures lost (exact years?? what about Los Altos Hills??).45

Today the playgrounds of the wealthy are more likely to be found in the North Bay, the last redoubt of exurban living in the Bay Area, where it is still possible to command commodious open spaces, pastoral landscapes and a bit of the wilds. The North Bay counties might have gone over to mass housing if there hadn't been an environmentalist revolt to protect open space, the coast and the vineyards in the 1960s (see chapter 5). But when the door closed on uncontrolled growth, Marin's social luster was confirmed and it became the richest county in the western United States. The slopes of Mt. Tam -- Mill Valley, Ross and Kentfield are the preferred venues, but once-modest modest tract homes in Greenbrae and Corte Madera or weekend houses in San Anselmo or Sausalito have been upgraded by the urgency of the well-to-do to get in under the fence. Unlike San Mateo, there is almost no industry, no airport and no little boxes to lower the social average.46 To top it off, Beryl Buck of Ross, heir to the Belridge oil fortune, left all her money
in 1975 to the people of Marin county; the Buck Fund, now worth billions, has built a temple to itself high atop a hill overlooking Novato -- a northern guard tower to match the Golden Gate.

The Napa and Sonoma Valleys have long had a sprinkling of old money -- Parrots, Bourns, Crockers, Spreckels, Livermores and Floods, with a DuPont or two thrown in -- to go with their vineyards and wineries. Prohibition took the luster off the area, but as the wine industry revived, the rich again began to sample the ambience and dabble in vineyardry. In the 1950s developer Henry Doelger bought an estate in Healdsburg and Napa's Silverado Country Club was launched to serve as a watering-hole resort for the gentry. The 1960s brought a new generation of vintners, including an heir to the Swanson fortune, the Trefethens of Kaiser Industries, and Walt Disney's widow, among others. By the 1970s, Pat Montandon, the Pearl Mesta of San Francisco, was throwing parties in Napa and Charlotte Malliard (cum Swig, cum Schultz), the doyen of high society, blazed the social trail to the Mission Valley Inn at Sonoma.

Robert Mondavi opened a new era of architectural opulence and historical revivalism with the soaring archway of his neo-Mission style winery designed by L.A.'s Clifford May in 1968. Sterling Vineyards built an Aegean villa on a knoll, with an alpine tramway for the tourists. Clos Pegase lured post-modernist Michael Graves to drop an Egyptian temple in the 1980s. Monticello Winery is miniature of Jefferson's colonial manor. French outposts Domaine Chandon and Dominus in the Napa Valley strike a radically modernist pose, while tradition-hungry Jordan and Chateau St. Jean in Sonoma mimic Gallic manor houses to the stone.47

This building boom carried over to the luxurious houses of the new vinousie of the North Bay and their followers into the vineyards. Unlike the anxious nouveaux riches of Blackhawk, the wealthy of the North Bay have no need for gated communities or bloated houses. In Napa, there are the Leonard neo-adobe Ranch House (1977) by Andrew Batey and the Kirlin house in the form of an adobe winery by Batey and Mark (1981). Robert Overstreet's Oliver Ranch House nears Geyserville to the north is a stone neo-craftsman work with a metal roof (1986). In the Nineties there has been a projection of techno-Modern from San Francisco out to the countryside, with lots of windows, corrugated metal, daring projections, and mass-produced industrial materials -- and the airy openness of the best modernism, as in Joan Hallberg's Sonoma House on the coast (1989). Of course, there have been many Blackhawk-style monsters plopped down in the Valley, but the worst, a $10 million price-gouger bought by [xxxxxxxx], was torched by his nefarious business cronies in 19xx.48

Gardening styles have shifted along with the estate landscape. While gardens have suffered from house bloat -- there is little room for landscaping around a Monster Home on a small lot in the Oakland hills or Palo Alto -- there has been a vibrant new turn in garden horticulture and landscape design, the 'California Landscape Garden.'49 Developed by the deft hand of a new crop of landscape architects, such as Ron Hermann, Mai Arbegast, Jonathon Plant and Stephen Suzman, and a proliferation of small landscape firms. The new garden movement strikes a neo-Mediterranean pose, featuring the plants from the five Mediterranean zones of the world, especially Australia and South Africa. The result is a floral abundance not seen since the heyday of the Victorian collectors, but now more carefully targeted to California's climatic regimes and ecotones, and planted with an eye to water conservation. Such xeriscaping, it has been found, can be as verdant and colorful as any English garden, and more varied in its hews, shapes and smells. Stone work is back in fashion, as well, with stone-masons imported from afar to build raised bed, steps, terraces, and mortarless walls out of local (Napa) and imported stone (Arizona flagstone and pastels are much favored). So, too, are fountains, columns and other Italianate touches. The new style has spread feverishly to middle class plots and on commercial sites, but its most elegant statements can be found in the swath of prime estate lands across the wine country.50

The North Bay landscape comes with its own collective garden, thousands of acres of picturesque vineyards. The homes of the wealthy are either set in the midst of the vineyards, planted all around in new vineyards, or hanging from the hilltops with the Arcadian grape lands below. This is a truly Medici an landscape of Tuscan plenitude at the feet of the great burgkers. It is a place of consumption, par excellence, which nonetheless depends on intensive rural production. Wine-making is that rarity in this day and age: an industry that attracts the rich to live in its midst. These pleasing prospects are not designed by landscape architects but by engineers of the grape, yet they speak volumes in the language of social aesthetics. They also return a good profit, not to mention tax deductions, making the prospectus as pleasing as the prospect.51
The wine country is more than a landscape, it is a way of life, self consciously developed by the local bourgeoisie and trumpeted to the world. San Francisco investors, backed by banker John Montgomery, opened up the Meadowood hotel in St. Helena in the 1970s, which became home to the Napa Valley Wine Auction, Robert Mondavi’s imitation of the charity auctions of the Hospice de Beaune, and a major social event on the annual calendar of the rich. The Napa lifestyle was soon being bowdlerized in the TV series *Falcon Crest*, filmed at the old Parrott mansion. In 1976, Francis Ford Coppola, relocating from Los Angeles to San Francisco, bought the old Niebaum estate, using the proceeds from *The Godfather* and bringing a touch of Hollywood glamour. In 2001, Mondavi founded a vast new education center and museum, Copia, dedicated to the promotion of good wine, good food and the good life, Napa style. (who designed Copia???)

The taste for the good life runs throughout the Bay Area and its unnaturally well-to-do middle classes. They consume wine and California cuisine with abandon, pay small fortunes for their houses, and garden enthusiastically. But their mode of living took a somewhat different turn from the *haute bourgeoisie* in the 20th century, one deeply inscribed on the landscape and one that offered a distinctive Bay vision of the possibilities for urban and suburban form. We turn to that now.
The Middle Landscape: Ecotopia and Eclectia

By the turn of the century, Bay Area residential building broke with the consciously urbane style of the Victorian era. While the very rich moved out to grand estates, the rest of the upper classes found their niche in a new middle landscapes of the suburbs. Here we find the generalization of the Romantic Suburb, broadening its scope to be the petite bourgeois utopia. Of course, many of the upper middle class were installed in the larger upper class developments like St. Francis Wood. But just below this level, other large tracts would flourish under the guiding hand of the big developers and merchant builders. This is the place I call 'Eclectia', after its preposterous but lovable jumble of architecture styles. It would have a certain California look to it, but would be immediately recognizable to anyone from the eastern United States as the prim and manicured portion of suburbia, a cut above the crabgrass frontier.

Its counterpoint is the region's most unique residential ecology, which I call 'ecotopian', because it is more than an architectural style, more than a country Romance, more than another planned bourgeois utopia; it is a reflection of the distinctive bohemian and environmental cultures of the Bay Area. The rustic cabin, craftsman and carpenter styling, and exposed redwood are the characteristic way of building in the ecotopian landscape; the canyons, hillsides and drainage of the coast range are its terrain; and the forest and oak woodlands its chosen habitat. The look of these bohemian groves is artfully unkempt: a carefully cultivated vision of the city and nature at one with the city.

The middle class suburbs were born in the heady days around the turn of the century, when a fever of civic growth and rebirth overtook the San Francisco region. As the mining era wound down, the city was due for a transformation in every domain, including urban form. In the wave of accumulation and high profits from the depression of the 1890s to World War I, building activity was ferocious. With it the city exploded radically outward. Faster transport by electric trolley, gasoline-driven ferries, and early automobiles helped propel the outward march of residential suburbs. So did the dispersal of industry and commerce into the East Bay and the expansion of the two new universities, Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley (propelled by the fortunes of Leland Stanford and Phoebe Hearst). The earthquake and fire of 1906 accelerated a diaspora already underway.

The suburban revolution was as much a class project as the Victorian city had been, led this time by an expanding middle class of professionals, technicians, and managers, tied closely to the new class of modern businessmen and their administered corporations. The Bay Area had a particularly large stock of the upper middle class because of San Francisco's role as commercial, financial and intellectual center of the western United States at the time. The design problem facing developers, architects and engineers was to carve out spaces appropriate to the sensibilities of a more sophisticated, college educated group, often tied directly to the universities. This was a class project cutting across the United States at the time, but it took a special twist in the Bay Area with its peculiar landscape ideas, architectural innovations, and community politics.

The ecotopian landscape was primarily a phenomenon of the early 20th century suburban fringe, and its epicenter was North Berkeley, hard by the University of California. But the same social ecotone stretches for miles along the East Bay hills from Kensington to Montclair (Oakland), and pops up on the backside of the hills in Orinda and Lafayette. Ecotopian suburbs are abundant in Marin county and came to be tucked along the hilly spine of the San Francisco Peninsula, particularly in the foothills and valleys behind Stanford, and over the ridge in the outposts of La Honda and Santa Cruz. Ecotopia even made a brief appearance in San Francisco, at Russian Hill, and shows itself today along a broad front in the Arcadian by-ways of the North Bay.

The term 'ecotopian' applies better to this constellation than the more common 'Arcadian' or 'Arts and Crafts'. It is the archetypal landscape of the libertarian, bohemian fraction of the upper middle class who lend a special social flavor to Northern California society. Rather, a streak of bohemian rebellion runs through it, harboring a fierce conservation ethic and quasi-religious idealism that is more akin to Wilberforce's London Evangelicals than to today's Reagan-Bush Republican Majority. Its outposts have
sequestered many an arcane social practice and political idea over the years -- from Isadora Duncan's modern dance to Gary Snyder's Zen environmentalism. In literature, it has been projected onto the whole of the Pacific Northwest as Ecotopia by Ernest Callenbach or Fly Fishing in America by Richard Brautigan, held up as the last redoubt of a radical populist vision of the American middle class as the bearers of a moral order in opposition to capitalist and communist savagery. All the same, the Bay Area's free-thinking enclaves partake of many of the same illusions as all suburban hideaways.

Three conditions had to be satisfied in this ecotopian quest: a sylvan landscape, artful homes, and a counterculture.

The first element of the ecotopian form was the 'rustic' setting. The formality of English and Mediterranean gardens would not do. Instead, the new suburbanites went straight to the woods. The best places were tiny pockets of second-growth redwoods along creeks, but oak woodlands and high chaparral would do nicely, too. But since most of the hillsides were grass covered, the new suburbanites started planting trees and shrubs with a vengeance, transforming open vistas into a thicket of greenery. This was quite in keeping with the long-standing California practice of vast plantings of pine, eucalyptus and deodars by large landowners and developers; only the variety was a bit greater. Today's residents are always surprised by old photographs showing bare hills behind Berkeley and other bohemian retreats, disbeliefing that their is a cultivated rusticity in such a literal sense. This folly of foliage contrasted sharply with the barren streetscapes of Victorian San Francisco, and was a rejection of the visual cast of the city, as surely as architectural and planning practices would turn their backs on Victorian row houses and straight streets.

The turn of the century romance of the woods was part of a more general social outlook toward the pernicious effects of cities and industrialism. The Bay Area's fledging conservation movement was taking off rapidly due to widespread repugnance at the untrammeled brutality visited on the state by miners, fishermen, and timber cutters over the previous half-century. To this was joined a more genteel goal of bringing nature under the wing of civilized pursuits, such as hiking, outdoorsmanship, and taking the waters at hot springs. Naturalism was a coat of many colors made up of both the dissipated revels of the Bohemian Club and the ascetic creed of John Muir. But its participants shared a certain mystical religiosity -- part Transcendental, part Masonic, part Romantic -- about nature and art, with the Big Trees and Yosemite Valley as universal icons. Their goal was to marry the resort to city life, and to enjoy a cultivated rusticity in both the land and themselves. (see chapter 5).

The key thing was not the garden, but the woods. The whole setting was to be a garden, with a heavy reference to imagined forests of medieval northern Europe. This reversed the priorities of the great estates, as much as did the differences in house size. Those villa-like settings are more properly called Arcadian. But neither was this an ecological outlook in the present sense, since it, too, depended on heavy doses of water and favored an understorey of rhododendrons, camellias, fuchsias, wisteria, tree ferns, and roses the noded toward English and Romantic gardens. But later shifts in taste have not undone the scene painting of the arborists, and one can put native and xerophytic plants into the understory without altering the picture significantly. Much later at the far exurban edge, the isolated cabin on the hillside clearing or along the sea cliffs would become popular under the hand of architects such as Mario Corbett and Joe Escherick, showing an even more unvarnished affection for California's native ecotones -- but the ecotopian chain of ideology is not broken thereby.

The second element of the ecotopian suburbs was the rustic home. This was usually small, often a weekend retreat and sometimes no more than glorified cabin. It was built largely in unvarnished redwood, whether rough-hewn exteriors or finished interior paneling. Simple board and batten or planking were popular, as was shingle siding and roofing. Roofs were often steeply pitched with large overhangs, with revealed ceiling and cave beams. Elaborated woodwork was common, and windows and doors were usually done in wood. Stone masonry was common in chimneys, porches, pathways and garden walls.

Into the urban woodlands came the new generation of architects to work on smaller commissions for the upper middle class, starting with their friends. Bernard Maybeck's first house was for Charles Keeler (1894), a poet and advocate of The Simple Home, and Berkeley was soon the center of the action, with
hundreds of homes in the new style. Joseph Worchester built the Bay Area's first brown-shingle cottage, after his own design, in the Piedmont hills (1888), then carried the idea over to San Francisco, where his home on Russian Hill. Coxhead, Polk, Maybeck, Schweinfurth, and John Hudson Thomas built houses in Mill Valley, Sausalito, Belvedere and Palo Alto, as well.[57] [verify??]

The rustic house took its studied simplicity from the English cottage movement, its shingled walls and plain interiors from New England revival by McKim, Mead and White, and married both to the mountain cabin of 49er lore. Buyers and architects were deeply influenced by the craftsman and vernacular emphasis of the Arts and Crafts movement of Englishman William Morris and in Japanese design, both of which flourished in California at the turn of the century. 58 Redwood was cheap and plentiful, and easy to work with; and stone and brick were unstable in earthquakes. Moreover, the designers were looking for a "freer arrangement of space and mass on a low budget than was possible with masonry".59 The architects were fascinated by the possibilities of the local terrain, as well. Clinging to the region's hillsides, the rustic house could be unpresssupposing and still offer the occupant space through multiple levels and the grandeur of a bay view. The split-level house evolved easily here, and Longstreth argues that there was no precedent for Polk's first multi-level house on Russian Hill.

What had emerged by 1910 was a distinctive Bay Regional Style in house design, which influences design to this day.60 The existence of such a style was brought to the attention of the cognoscenti by Lewis Mumford and the New York Museum of Modern Art in the late 1940s, yet it continues to be studiously ignored by most historians of American architecture because of its anti-modernism. Even Frank Lloyd Wright demeaned it. Yet Maybeck, the poor man's Wright, shared most of the same craft, vernacular and Japanese influences as the American master, and was quite 'modern' in his use of industrial materials. Indeed, he and John Hudson Thomas did some radically modern houses (concrete, square lines, vertical windows) before 1910, as early as San Diego's path-breaking Irving Gill and LA's Richard Neutra.

Nonetheless, the dominant reference point of the Bay Area rustic architecture was Medieval, as in Maybeck's vast fireplaces and gargoyles. This reached its extreme in the Hansel and Gretel houses of W.R. Yelland, Carr Jones and Thomas in Berkeley and Forest Hills (SF), and Hugh Comstock's work in Carmel, during the 1920s.61 The innovators would be followed by innumerable lesser architects and builders who would fill up the middle class suburbs with half-baked world history domesticated for mass consumption. These mannerisms would, like craftsman woodwork and redwood shingles, be widely disseminated into the mainstream in the mass-produced California bungalows of the interwar era.

The Bay Region Tradition ran smack into High Modernism in the 1930s, and survived -- even triumphed. In one sense it is true that, "[European] Modernism did not take root as obviously or as swiftly in the Bay Area as it did in other parts of the country," particularly Southern California. But local architects (many of whom arrived from somewhere else) did engage in a vigorous form of Modernist expression. Sally Woodbridge has called this 'carpenter-style' of Modernism because of its continuing affinity for redwood and plainness, in the Simple Home tradition. She goes on, "[Bay region] architects have shunned theory while making an ideological use of materials such as redwood."62 Yet this is too rustic an image, for all the leading practitioners of the mid-20th century were fully Modernist in the clarity of design, geometric lines, freedom of interior spaces, and large window-walls, and were comfortable drawing from a sophisticated range of Euro-modern, American modern, American vernacular and Japanese influences. As Zahid Sardar has observed, "When Modernism arrived, it was met by this type of healthy regionalism, already rooted in commonsense architecture, which forced it to retreat from the extremes of the mechanistic modern idiom."63

The region's leading modernist, William Wurster, is noted for his studied plainness. He disliked 'trying to compress the mansion' into a small home, so his earliest designs draw on the vernacular of 19th century ranch houses, all raw planking and whitewash, and Monterey-style colonials with shutters, verandas and tile floors. These designs were widely replicated among postwar California Ranch houses, and have a national impact. Wurster also did the first upright wooden box on the seaside, the first low-slung suburban homes, and even experimented with concrete block and corrugated iron -- all by 1940. Wurster did not favor the strict horizontal lines and flat roofs of the Internationalists, but he was not a traditionalist
in the Craftsman sense, and was keenly interested in modern innovations in building design, like the unified ‘Wurster footing’ joining inside and outside space.\textsuperscript{64}

Other leading architects of the age were Gardner Dailey, Mario Corbett and Joe Esherick, whose offices spawned most of the rest of the postwar practitioners, such as Ted Bernardi, Donn Emmons, Charles Callister and Charles Moore. Dailey and Esherick were more elegant than Wurster, Corbett more rustic. They all did a wide range of houses, from city verticals to suburban horizontals, but in their own homes men like Bernardi, Emmons and Esherick made the telling move to the ecotopian enclaves -- Mill Valley, Kentfield, Berkeley -- and putting up vernacular barn-like structures among the oak trees.\textsuperscript{65}

The Modern mainstream may have sneered at the barn-builders, but even the most classically Internationalists architects clad their houses in redwood siding, as in John Dinwiddie's Roos House in San Francisco. And when Modern giants such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn and L.A's R.M. Schindler and Richard Neutra came to the Bay Area to work, they all adapted to the regional predilection for wood and naturalized landscaping.\textsuperscript{66}

As with the landscape architects of the postwar era, the building boom provided lots of opportunities for small practices doing middle class homes, until the squeeze of the 1960s. This steady stream of small houses allowed for ample experimentation if not grandiose statements. And the middle class was happy to buy into the new styles thanks to modest prices, low interest rates, and the promotions of \textit{Sunset} and other magazines.\textsuperscript{67}

As the Internationalist impulse for the low and horizontal and concrete played out in the 1960s, the Bay Area Tradition got a new lease on life. At Sea Ranch on the Sonoma Coast, Charles Moore and Joe Esherick (followed by William Turnbull, George Homsey and others) captured national attention with their upright redwood sheds, whose angled roofs recalled the mines of early California, as well as Wurster's Aptos house thirty years earlier. This design captured perfectly the new ecotopian attitudes of the 1960s, and so Berkeley, Montclair, Mill Valley and other established ecotopian suburbs enjoyed a vigorous infill of empty lots with redwood revival houses. More significantly, the Sea Ranch look proved ideal as a medium for the rush to condominiums across the country.\textsuperscript{68}

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The third element in the ecotopian constellation was a degree of bohemian rebellion, artistic pursuits, and communal planning. This combination is harder to come by than the wherewithal to purchase a weekend retreat or an architect-designed home. It was confined chiefly to Berkeley, the intellectual heart of the Bay Area at the turn of the last century, with selected outliers elsewhere.

In Berkeley, Bernard Maybeck had become the sage of the professional and artistic community living north of the university campus, with its bohemian, countercultural tinge.\textsuperscript{69} After Cedar Street was rammed straight up into what local businessmen derisively called “Nut Hill”, the northsiders organized The Hillside Club in 1896 under the titular leadership of Maybeck and Charles Keeler (the real work was undoubtedly done by a group of determined women), in order to force the city to adopt enlightened design principles. The nuts had the last word. Northeast Berkeley was taken off the grid and redrawn as a charming warren of sinuous, narrow streets following the contours of the hills. An inspired network of pathways gave easy access by foot between the lateral streets and to the main trolley routes. The whole northside of Berkeley filled in with hundreds of brown-shingle and rustic homes designed by Maybeck and his followers before World War I. The University campus also had a strong Maybeckian influence, and even John Galen Howard, who came west to fulfill the Beaux Arts design for the central campus, began to litter the grounds with shingle-style buildings. South of campus, in the Elmwood and College Avenue districts (just down slope from the Claremont), where the favorite style was still the Edwardian box house, these, too, were frequently clad in rustic shingles.\textsuperscript{70}

A self-conscious bohemian arts colony resided on top of Russian Hill, which considered itself the Montmartre of San Francisco. Not only was this one of the hotspots for the new architects and the brown-shingle style, but it is where Willis Polk made his home, along with Joseph Worcester and his Swedeborgians, and Ina Coolbrith and a slew of artists. Overseeing it all was the wealthy Horatio Livermore, who owned most of the property, and lived in a house designed by Julia Morgan. Livermore
was influenced by City Beautiful planning ideas, laying down residential cul-de-sacs and baroque stairways
designed by Polk (Daniel Burnham of Chicago, who drew up a Beaux Arts city plan for San Francisco in
1900, was a Swedenborgian, too). This gives Russian Hill a distinctive cast to this day, despite the
intrusion of several high-rise apartments allowed in the 1950s before the local community spearheaded the
anti-high rise and anti-freeway movements (see chapter 1). They also insisted in the 1980s that the site of
Worcester's home be rebuilt with a brown-shingle complex by Joe Esherick and associates.71

In Piedmont, the Reverend Worcester and a circle of artists such as George Sterling, Xavier Martinez and
Jack London (who lived in Worcester's shingle cottage for two years) gathered round Leila and Frank
Havens; but Piedmont was little altered by the experience. On the other hand, when Sterling moved down
to Carmel -- another of his uncle Frank's real estate promotions -- he and his friends gave the place a
decidedly bohemian, arts colony cast which persists to this day, and made it a delightful outpost of
ecotopian sensibilities and community planning.72

Some of the Marin and Peninsula enclaves had the same love of the urban woodland and rusticity, but
lacked the intellectual presence of Berkeley. Mill Valley had Laura Lovell White, however, a formidable
organizer of the California (Women's) Club and founder of the Outdoor Arts Club, whose clubhouse was
designed by Maybeck. Stanford faculty lent an air of the bohemian retreat to parts of old Palo Alto and the
campus, but would have a much greater impact in later years on the foothill woodland suburbs like Portola
Valley and Los Altos Hills (see chapter 5). Farther south, Saratoga had a small, liberal intellectual
community around Fremont Older, Charles Scott Wood and Sara Bard Field. Furthermore, Berkeley,
Stanford and other bastions of the humanistic professions created their own set of outliers for weekend and
summer retreats, with the same ecotopian flavor. These could be found in cabin colonies and resorts along
the coast at Inverness, Bolinas, Guerneville and Dos Rios, Big Basin and Santa Cruz, and in the Sierra at
Fallen Leaf, Echo Lake, Strawberry Lake, and around Sierra City.

Ecotopia got a new lease on life with the bohemian and environment upsurge of the 1960s. Sea Ranch
was, of course, a tightly planned and landscape-conscious development (with the help of Larry Halprin),
which spawned an equally tight and self-conscious community of owners -- who today despair at the
crowding of knock-off houses as the subdivision finally builds out. On the coast south of the Bay, when
the University of California expanded to Santa Cruz in the 1960s, it opted for a set of isolated colleges in
the redwoods away from the main town, done in rustic modern style. Mill Valley, Fairfax, and Pt. Reyes
Station became prime territory for the Beat and Hippie reflux out of San Francisco, featuring rockers David
Croby, Santana, Jerry Garcia and Grace Slick, Buddhist philosophers Gary Snyder and Allan Watts, and
writer Richard Brautigan, which suddenly made the place even more like Berkeley than Berkeley (indeed,
these remain popular among writers like Isabel Allende, Martin Cane (?) Smith, Annie LaMott and
renegades from fame such as Sean Penn and George Lucas). And the idea got a huge boost from the back-
to-the-land ethic exported to the rural fastnesses of Sonoma, Mendocino and Humboldt counties at the
same time, where Thomas Pynchon, Alice Walker and others secluded themselves.73

There were, of course, always definite limits to the spread of the ecotopian landscape. Many
professionals, managers and small businessmen did not want anything out of the ordinary, and most
developers were best at cranking out generic middle class subdivisions. In the early 20th century, these
were commonly in the Romantic Suburb vein, downscale versions of St. Francis Woods or the Uplands.
This is a land of Eclectia, the culture to which bohemia ran counter.

The East Bay was the main scene of such developments. Before the First World War, the Realty Syndicate
opened several tracts along the Oakland foothills, including Trestle Glen and Rockridge (sic). Mason-
McCuffie extended North Berkeley with his Cragmont and Northbrae developments, and upper middle
class portions of Piedmont were filled in. Between the wars, Kensington opened up and John Spring
developed Thousand Oaks. On the Peninsula, San Mateo and Burlingame were being subdivided for the
middle class, and Palo Alto continue to grow. In San Francisco, the pattern was tighter and more often on
the grid, but the Marina District (filled for the Exposition of 1915) was built up in the same middle class
spirit.
In the typical upper middle class subdivision, certain infrastructure and amenities became standard after 1900: with macadamized streets, planted trees, and electricity, water and sewers to every lot. Planning and zoning became established practices by the 1920s and the curvilinear street much in favor (if not yet universal). Between the wars, the merchant builders arrived, creating larger subdivisions (average about 100 lots, but up to 1000), with smaller lots. These builders, supplied with ample credit from the banks, built many houses ahead of demand. They learned to organize production in a more efficient manner, orchestrating dozens of subcontractors for all the modern add-on fixtures, and some prefabrication was introduced. Lots and homes were not longer sold by auction but by realtors, but in no case did even the largest merchant builders handle their own sales. Houses were built and sold in groups to avoid the scattered in-fill effect of earlier subdivisions. A good example of this kind of operation is Baywood Park Company, which developed the Parrott estate in San Mateo in 1927.74

Middle class tastes ran were thoroughly eclectic, but favored the kind of ‘compressed mansions’ that Wurster would later deride. The typical subdivision of the twenties was a veritable magical mystery tour of world architecture: villas of the Tuscan, French or Roman variety, Moorish and Egyptian fantasies, Tudor manors and Norman farmhouses, Georgian plantation houses and New England clapboards, Prairie Style homes, and craftsman bungalows. Rounding out the selection were the Mediterranean revival styles and the home-grown Mission style most characteristic of California at the time. The middle class were no less enthusiastic about the mythic ties to Mexico, Spain, Italy and Greece than the rich, although more pronounced in Southern California. Still, in places like Trestle Glen, Palo Alto, and the Marina it has left a most agreeable legacy of domestic architecture.75

The middle class, chiefly its women, were always great enthusiasts for gardening, but now found a much greater infrastructure of support from the Bay Area’s increasing number of domestic nurseries and a more reliable water supply. A popular genre of gardening literature proliferated as well, in popular handbooks by the new professionals such as John McLaren and Edward Wickson and retrospectives like that of Winifred Starr Dobyns. One even provide model garden designs for middle class bungalows. The garden craze was spread by means of the new, specialized mass circulation magazines, such as House and Garden and American Homes and Gardens.76

Of course, the bohemian woodlands continued to absorb all manner of houses as lots filled in from the 1920s to the 1950s. The Mediterranean mélange of homes and spectacular oak-studded rock outcrops of Thousand Oaks (which barely failed a vote for a public park in 19xx) make this neighborhood an extension of North Berkeley in more ways than legal incorporation. As styles shifted from the Mediterranean to the California ranch house and Bay Region Modern in the 1940s and 50s, so, too, were these added to the mix, from Montclair to Mill Valley.

At the height of postwar suburbanization, the typical middle class tract became more orderly than ever because it was built out more quickly by a single developer. Typical house styles in a tract were quite limited: minor variations (like flipping the blueprint) on a handful of designs for flat-roof Moderns, ranch houses or, by the 1960s, split levels. In this era, the largest number of upper middle class subdivisions were going in on the Peninsula, followed by Marin and out Highway 24 in the East Bay. Compared with the subdivisions for the rich, these were smaller, more grid-like, more monotonous, and with less regard for landscape. Good examples are to be found in the string of Marin new towns along 101 built in the 1950s and 60s: Greenbrae, Larkspur, Corte Madera, and Terra Linda.77

Nonetheless, the ecotopian landscape spread farther than might be expected, given that the social context that gave it shape had largely dissipated. That is, the ecological niches and architectural forms it had pioneered retained their middle class appeal. Rustic ranch-style homes of the well-to-do continued to be tuck into the hillsides of Los Gatos or Lafayette, while streets of flat-roofed Modern houses in Ladera or Kensington would be so planted up with trees as to ultimately gain entrance into the urban woodlands.

On the other hand, while Berkeley and Marin conditions might favor English lushness in gardening, replete with rhododendrons, camellias, roses, and fuchsias, most of the middle class tracts of the postwar era on the drier Peninsula or transmontane East Bay leaned toward the restraint of Thomas Church and the Modern landscape gardeners. Indeed, Church’s tidy spaces were perfect for the more modest ambitions of the mass middle class and the new enthusiasm for indoor-outdoor living in Eichler tracts and other modern tract houses. In a perverse way the Depression had cleared the ground for the new wave of professional
landscape architects by ending the glorious days of the inspired amateur and rich patron. In order to survive, young graduates turned to working with tract developers and shopping centers, making a virtue of necessity by learning to design artfully for compact gardens, commercial frontage, and low maintenance. This made their fashions useful for a larger audience than ever before, people who were, moreover, being imbued with the new ideas at garden shows run by the garden clubs of the suburbs and by the mass circulation magazines such as California Arts and Architecture, House and Home, and, above all, Sunset. The latter had been purchased by Ruth and Larry Lane, formerly of Better Homes and Gardens, who turned Sunset into The Magazine of Western Living during the 1930s, and began publishing garden and household handbooks that were the bibles of the postwar Bay Area middle class homeowner (Church put in the garden at Lane Publishing in Menlo Park in 1975). 78

Toward the end of the 20th century, ecotopia and restraint were both in vogue in a new way with the change in landscaping fashions toward the New California Landscape Garden and its emphasis on water conservation, ecological thinking, and native (or quasi-native) planting. The Bay Area middle class had responded with delight and a sense of communal virtue, from Moraga to San Anselmo. A vast popular change in attitudes occurred in response to the droughts and protests against further water projects in the 1970s and 1980s. And the new gardening ethic got wide promotion from a new crop of gardening book (especially the ever-updated Sunset Western Garden Book), public gardens such as Strybing Arboretum, Filoli, and the Luther Burbank home in Santa Rosa, a host of new retail nurseries (especially in Berkeley and Sonoma), and magazines for the devout such as Pacific Horticulture. 79

On the other hand, ecotopia and restrained Modernism both took a tumble in the face of the last generation of unrestrained growth, house price acceleration, glorification of excess, and sheer bad taste. Symbolically, this era was heralded by an eruption of flames in the East Bay hills in 1991.

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Berkeley's ecotopia had already known a rude awakening in the northside fire of 1923. Shingle-style wooden houses lost favor after 600 of them were swept away in a single Autumn day. Community power and design with nature suffered another blow when the aesthetics of football triumphed at the University of California and a huge stadium was jammed into scenic Strawberry Canyon behind the campus. The efflorescence of bohemian experimentation tailed off. Similarly, Mill Valley took a hit from the fire of 1927.....

[Mill Valley fire of 1927 here -- see Spitz book]

The ecotopian idyll was shattered again in 1991 by the Firestorm of October 20. In a matter of hours, a raging inferno whipped up by desiccating, easterly winds consumed over 3,000 homes in Oakland (Montclair) and Berkeley. The firestorm came roaring out of Claremont Canyon on a quiet Sunday morning at speeds of over 125 miles per hour. Over half the damage was done in the first two hours, although the fire burned on through the day until the winds died down around midnight. The fire leapt across all 8 lanes of Highway 24, fed by its own vomiting spout of gases from burning vegetation and buildings. Houses exploded within seconds of each other, while hosts of trees turned into torches to light the next acre of hillside or the next row of homes. Some 27 people were trapped in the flames, surprised in their homes or fleeing on foot after their cars bogged down in traffic jams along the narrow streets. One couple boiled to death seeking refuge in their hot tub. Thousands of firefighters rallying to the cause were repeatedly driven back by walls of flame; fire-engines could not negotiate many of the streets; water supplies to fight the fire ran out; gas lines still belched forth fuel until evening; downed power lines threatened to entangle the unsuspecting. Helicopters and planes trying to drop retardants could not find their targets for the billows of smoke and cinders. Chaos reigned.

The following day revealed a moonscape of devastation. Chimneys and blackened tree trunks stood in mute testimony to the passing inferno, where oven-like temperatures had melted cars and girders into twisted relief. Residents returned to cinder-filled foundations, from which an occasional piece of china might be sifted as a remembrance. People lost everything they owned; few had time to carry away more than a box of valued papers, a photo album, or a beloved cat. Losses totaled more than $1.5 billion, making it the costliest urban fire in the United States since San Francisco's in 1906.
No one was prepared for such a holocaust, because few recognized the hillsides and canyons for what they were: an urban forest. This was nothing less than a forest fire in the middle of a city, and forest fires burn with an intensity and at a scale unimaginable in urban terms. If San Francisco is "the city that waits to die", the ecotopian suburbs are no less a deathtrap when the Diablo winds funnel out of the hot interior, and humidity plummets from coastal to desert conditions in a few hours. Suddenly, a felicitous accommodation between city and country turns out to be a bald affront to nature’s hazards and good sense. Urbane anti-urbanism proves, in the end, not to be the best of both worlds, city and woodland, but possibly the worst.

Such calamities offer a golden opportunity to reconsider the mistakes of the past, from building codes to road widths. But the lesson of such occasions is that property owners want to proceed without impediment to rebuild as they please. When the great architect, Daniel Burnham, rushed back to San Francisco in 1906, sure that his grand city plan would be adopted in the wake of the devastation, he was rebuffed; the symbolic hero of ‘06 was Amadeo Giannini, standing on the street corner handing out loans to his North Beach neighbors to rebuild as quickly as possible. The symbol chosen for the homeowners ad hoc association in the Oakland burned-over district was, predictably enough, the Phoenix.

Rebuilding in the fire zone is nearing completion today, with few changes in roads, utilities or building standards. Few indeed are those property owners who can stomach the idea of public design review or control over the landscaping around their homes. Gone is the sense of community resolve and sense of planning with nature once lodged at the Hillside Club. In its place comes the spirit of neo-liberalism, when social regulations must give way to untrammeled private property rights and the unchecked market is in revolt against the planning ideal.  

Rebuilding has revealed another unanticipated threat to the ecotopian way of life: monster houses. Land in the heart of a large and wealthy metropolis has a market value much greater than when rustic cottages were in vogue. Middle class incomes have surged, putting half million dollar houses within range of many, and so has their American spatial exuberance: average floor space has jumped up from 1800 to 2800 square feet, bilious houses covering up most of their modest lots. An architectural review team likened the effect to train cars perched on the hillside, and decried the loss of open terrain and a spirit of unity. Styles have changed to favor Mission Redux and TechnoModern, and while some are brilliant, most are mundane examples of American middle class *Eclectia*. The power plinths of the 1980s and 1990s on the bare hillsides stand as a taunt to bohemia's declensions. The class project has changed.  

Nevertheless, the ambience of cultivated rusticity around the Bay region has worked it charm on generations of new arrivals looking for a middle class sanctuary that is neither too well ordered nor too far from the city streets. Los Angeles, by comparison, left Pasadena's Arroyo culture behind and went on to become a world center of modernism; LA remained a much more laisser-faire city, whose charm of the 1920s and arts and crafts counterculture were all but expunged, while the Bay Area poked along nursing its delights, holding developers to a higher standard, and cultivating enough of bohemia to remain different, and better for it.
The City Of Small Homes

The largest impress on the urban landscape of the Bay Area is made by mile upon mile of single-family homes occupied by the middling classes. This is the city of small homes. Nothing especially artful catches the eye in these vast domains of domesticity, behind the facades of modest accomplishment. This is the bedrock landscape of the metropolis, the starting and ending point for the lives of the vast majority of working people. The ecology of small, single-family homes is what most people mean by "the suburbs" -- though it is much less well studied than the Romantic Suburbs of the upper classes. It has been greatly promoted by the bourgeoisie as the domain of working class propriety and stability, but also decried as an empty wasteland. At best it appears banal, because we are so completely inured to its distinctiveness as a form of human habitation.82

California in the 20th century was ground zero for the small home. Southern California is well-known for its miles upon miles of small homes; indeed, by 1930, an astounding 94% of Angelinos lived in single-family homes. Less well publicized, the same thing nonetheless occurred in San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose.83 The realm of little houses for the masses begins in the mining era, where the 49ers built their rough and ready shacks all over San Francisco and around the Gold Country. But all that is gone from San Francisco today.

Nevertheless, many small houses in San Francisco date to the Victorian era. The Mission District, Potrero Hill, North Beach and Bernal Heights are replete with such homes, and many more were tucked along back streets of the Western Addition, the Eureka Valley or the South of Market. But the small home in the city takes the predominant form of stucco row houses built between the wars, running block after block after treeless block on the foggy west side of Twin Peaks in the Sunset and Richmond districts, and zig-zagging over hill and dale across the southern half of the city through the Ingleside, Excelsior and Bayview districts. The lines of little townhouses continue into northern San Mateo county as Daly City, Pacifica and South San Francisco. The majority of San Francisco's total land area is covered by these humble dwellings -- a city few tourists ever see.

The East Bay flatlands are similarly carpeted with modest homes, eight to the acre or more. This is the territory of the industrial working class of the first half of the 20th century (see also Chapter 3). Often no larger than San Francisco’s little boxes, virtually all East Bay houses are detached, with a yard. These begin with the Victorian workers’ cottages in West Oakland, Alameda city, and Fruitvale, one-story shotgun plans that only look bigger because most were elevated several feet, with high front steps (their first floors are now mostly converted to rooms or garages). In North Oakland, the ranks of small houses are dominated by single story Edwardian neo-classical cottages (modestly elevated, with front steps, as well). These are succeeded, as one approaches the Oakland-Berkeley border (a meaningless social line in the streetcar era), by an abundance of craftsman bungalows of the 1910s. Once into the flatlands of Berkeley and Albany, out at Richmond, or east into central East Oakland and San Leandro, one is in the land of little stucco houses of the 1920s. Few small houses were built during the Great Depression, but during the Second World War and through the end of the 1940s, outer East Oakland, San Leandro, Hayward, El Cerrito and Richmond gained thousands of tiny ranchettes.

In the ring of the metropolis built after World War II lies a vast terrain of postwar tract homes. The new working class suburbs filled up with ranchettes, sub-Eichler Moderns, and mini-split levels through the 1950s and 60s. These were sometimes still on town grids, but more often along curvilinear streets meant to suggest the romantic suburb of the well-to-do. But the lots are invariably small and the land prepared by bulldozer, leaving nothing of the previous vegetation (mostly grasslands, in any case). In Alameda, the chief postwar suburbs of small homes were in the south county, at Hayward, Fremont and Milpitas (sic). In Contra Costa county, there were Pinole, Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Concord. San Jose was the greatest site of such development in the Bay Area, joined, in Santa Clara county, by large stretches of Santa Clara, Cupertino, Sunnyvale and Mountain View close to the new electronics factories. In San Mateo county, the working class was mostly confined to the northern stretches, from Daly City to San Bruno, Millbrae and parts of San Mateo, along the eastern flatlands between El Camino Real and the Bayshore Freeway, and in the south at Redwood City, East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park.84
The detached, single-family house remains an icon of independence and security for most Americans, including the working class. It has deep roots in the nation’s widespread access to land, agrarian and small town virtues, and the politics of a small-owners’ Republic. It touched the heart of the artisanal and industrial craft workers of the 19th century, for whom home ownership offered a dream of escape from landlords and arrival in the vast ‘middle class’, not to mention the lordship of the family patriarch over his dominion. Immigrants and social reformers felt that owning a home was the way to become Americanized. In this century, “own your own home” became the slogan that steered capitalist interests, worker independence and state policy into a convergence. Its efflorescence in the postwar era rested on the unprecedented prosperity enjoyed by workers in the High Fordist period.

In California the triumph of the small city home came ahead of the rest of the nation, arriving by the turn of the century. This state would play a leading role in the political economy and morality play of 20th century mass suburbanization. Indeed, California presents a puzzle for the theorists of Fordism, because it led the nation in mass consumption, grounded in mass home ownership, while never becoming a premier region of Fordist, or assembly line, mass production industries. Why? This mass of small homes and homeowners were made possible by three things: capital, house design, and property development.

The rapid accumulation of capital in California during the mining era, and in San Francisco in particular, gave the state a huge leg up by the time of the Civil War. While luxury consumption took a healthy share of the wealth, a solid portion was reinvested in manufacturing and commerce that employed incoming workers and part was redistributed to workers -- especially skilled workers -- as high wages because their supply was relatively scarce (and because they fought for it). This gave them the wherewithal to think about saving up for a home of their own. This was made easier because another part of the capital surplus was circulating through banks and savings companies, some of which were willing to extend credit to home buyers. In the 19th century, mortgage credit was rather crude, beginning with installment payments; usually said to have been invented in Cincinnati in 1880s, installments were already in use by San Francisco’s Homestead Associations of the 1860s. In the early 20th century, Savings Banks were the chief mortgage lenders, but immigrant banks like Hibernia and Bank of Italy were forward in their approach to home financing. Banking reformers of the New Deal ushered in a golden age of easy mortgage finance for the masses (30 year terms, low interest, federal guarantees), which drove up homeownership to record heights by 1960.

San Francisco's abundant capital was also pumped into property development by capitalists eager to hit pay dirt in land speculation (cf. Chapter 1). At first this meant land purchase, but subsequently it led to subdividing, and loans to those who would promote and build housing. While the biggest money was always available for the upper class developments, some of it trickled down to the smaller operators filling up the working class flatlands. And, as their methods improved, the large developers would be in a position to make money off the small home as well as the great.

A big part of such speculations in the beginning were transit systems, beginning with horse cars, then cable cars, then electric streetcars, and always major streets for access. With the trolley systems in place by 1900, the era of mass suburbanization had truly dawned. It is often said that trolleys and later automobiles 'created' the suburbs, which is true in the sense of making it possible for the city to spread out so far that land would be cheap enough to allow the thousands upon thousands of small, detached homes that were affordable to the majority of the people. But the trolley systems were themselves financed out of the capital surplus, built expressly by investors to develop outlying lands into housing tracts. And cars would only become decisive in the expansion of small homes for workers in the 1920s and after World War II, when the State and Federal governments became deeply involved in organizing and promoting road and highway construction.

In the postwar era, working class access to single family housing just took off. Unemployment was low and wages -- the family wage of the male breadwinner -- were good, and job tenure more secure. Some of this was due to the general state of the economy and some to the growth of unionism after 1935. It gave the industrial working class unprecedented buying power to expend on new and better houses. Federal housing and tax policies were put into place in the New Deal that confirmed homeownership and the
single-family home as a national goal. Women, meanwhile, were sent back to the kitchen and the nursery after the War. The suburbs were positioned to sweep away all competition.90

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The purest embodiment of the democracy of shelter was the California bungalow. The bungalow wave hit California in the 1890s, expanded rapidly in the pre-World War I construction boom, exploded in the 1920s, and carried into the 1930s. The bungalow, which originated in India and was introduced to England in the 1860s as a holiday cottage, first became a form of mass housing in California, then went on to enjoy immense popularity across North America through the 1920s (reentering Britain later). The bungalow was the child of a new global system, as Anthony King has put it, but equally the child of the local, in California.91

The prototypical bungalow is a small, one or one-and-a-half storey house with no attic or basement. The layout is more or less square, with an open floor plan off a central hallway, and a low-pitched roof (usually hipped). Wider street frontages (35 feet) and broad windows (on two sides in most rooms) gave a feeling of more light, space and access to the outdoors. Ceilings came down to 8 feet, elaborate trim work was dropped, and cabinets and closets were built-in. They were fully equipped with the technology of modern life: electricity, indoor plumbing, gas heating, and washing machines. The shift from the verticality of Victorian townhouses to the horizontality of bungalows could not have been more striking visually.92

The first bungalows were wood and stone in the Arts and Crafts style, with large porches and low eaves in the Indian manner; thousands of gracious craftsman bungalows were built prior to World War I in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, especially Oakland. In the 1920s the term came to mean small stucco houses of various styles, often with smaller footprints, reduced eaves or flat roofs, and less woodwork inside. Small driveways and garages, tucked in the rear, were now regular features. In Southern California the most popular bungalow became the Mission style, while the north favored divers Mediterranean, Medieval kitsch and Prairie style. Eclecticism was the rule of the small home, too. The Bay Area, like L.A., has a huge number of stucco bungalows from the interwar period, especially on the flatlands of Berkeley, East Oakland and San Leandro and on the Peninsula in San Bruno, San Mateo, Menlo Park and Redwood City. Some of the most striking of these are the Hansel and Gretel miniatures of the little suburb of Albany, tucked in north of Berkeley.93

The bungalow was not the invention of a single mind, so much as a well traveled idea entering by professional networks and popular magazines and pattern books. But it did have some trickle-down architectural input. The ‘simple home’ started as a watchword of turn of the century reformers like Charles Keeler and Frank Lloyd Wright, which was later translated into practical forms for the mass market. Maybeck, in particular, experimented with methods of building inexpensively and creating a domestic space without servants. Many features of the Bay Region style translated to the common craftsman bungalow and the stucco bungalow. None of this, of course, had any input from the demos.94

A generation later, the push for the ‘minimal home’ was greatly intensified, as architects, planners and housing reformers joined forces with industrialists and developers in the pursuit of greater efficiencies in house design and production (simplicity was replaced by efficiency as the code word of American modernity and scientific management). The founders of the Bauhaus were mostly social radicals with a fierce dedication to mass housing. Standards for building construction were heavily promoted by Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce in the 1920s, as he carried the gospel of modernization in housing from California to Washington, and these continued to be pushed by the Federal Housing Administration in the 1930s. At the end of the decade, mass housing tracts was perfected for rural labor camps in the Central Valley by the Farm Security Administration, the brainchild of the Bay Area quartet of economist Paul Taylor, engineer Burton Cairns, architect Vernon DeMars and landscape architect Garrett Eckbo. Such ideas were further developed in the rush to build wartime worker housing -- 30,000 units alone in Richmond -- most of which was on the longhouse principle of 4-5 homes in one long building.95

While a great deal of publicity was given to the idea of mass producing houses, including experiments in factory-built homes, that was not where the real breakthrough lay. The principle gains in building efficiency were achieved through rationalized batch production. Concrete slab foundations were a big step made at the FSA sites. Standardization of fixtures, doors, and windows was another major simplification,
as were new materials such as plywood and plasterboard, and pre-fab cabinets, all of which could be factory produced. Further on-site gains in production were had through serialized construction, moving different subcontractors systematically through the tract of, and fabrication from subassemblies. California led the way in all these regards.96

By the 1940s, the look of the small house had changed again. Houses were even more horizontally oriented to the street, on 40 to 50-foot lots. Backyards opened up to lawn and patio, as clotheslines and dust bins disappeared. And the automobile was brought into the foreground in the attached garage and slab driveway (more proudly so in California than anywhere else). The California ranch house replaced the bungalow as the favorite house type, based on the innovations of architects Clifford May in Los Angeles and William Wurster in Berkeley. The ranch house was linear and asymmetrical, with external access from several points and usually a long porch with thin supports running along the back of the house. Northern architects went more for the 'Anglo' ranch style of board and batten walls and wood-framed windows, southern for the Mission style ranch house (sic).97

More expressly 'Modern' styles also came into vogue. Joseph Eichler was well-known for his commitment to modern design for tract homes, inspired by his experience living in a Frank Lloyd Wright house in Hillsborough. The designs were drawn up by a stable of young architects, including Robert Anshen and Claude Oakland, and came out more Wurster than Wright or Corbusier -- 'an unmistakable Bay Area look'. These featured slab foundations, sliding doors, and walls of glass opening on interior patios, flat roofs, exposed beams, large eaves, atrium entrances, and prominent garages. Other local architects like John Funk, Roger Lee and Campbell and Wong put Bay Area modern styles to work in small houses, as well. But the large developers had become the key mediators of taste, and Eichler dominated the scene in the 1950s with scores of tracts all around the region.98

In the 19th century, many, if not most, small homes were self-built or done by small carpenter-contractors. The weave of small patterns in building for the working class was particularly complex, as proprietors, realtors, builders and buyers cobbled together a thousand schemes to get the job done. This would continue to be true well into the 20th century. Large developers were not, in the first instance, targeting the working class market when more could be made off the upper classes. Yet the first big commercial builders who emerged in the Victorian era provided small homes on back streets for skilled workers (with liberal credit terms) as part of the mix.

While the main action in upper and middle class housing moved to the hillsides and suburbs after 1900, worker homes continued to be built block by block along the grided areas of San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland/Berkeley, or on the little grids of the new industrial towns springing up around the region, such as South City, Crockett and Richmond. The little house for the masses was coming on the market in larger and larger numbers, however, in the wide-open spaces of the trolley car avenues. Phalanxes of small contractor-builders were able to make a profit on standard lots, using catalogue order designs, on modest bungalows costing as little as $400 in 1910. It would take a while for the lessons of the large merchant builders for the middle class to spread to the construction of small homes for workers, but a key reason for the diffusion of mass housing to the middling classes was that houses became cheaper to build.

The 1930s ushered in a new breed of large merchant builder who could do the job. These builders accelerated the pace of mass suburban development and, after the war, tracts of small homes proliferated throughout the state. The Bay Area had some of the pioneers of such mass housing, even before the famous Levittowns of New York and Philadelphia. These 'community builders' unified land development, construction and sales under one company, filling tracts with several hundred homes at a time. The first were Henry Doelger in San Francisco and Daly City, David Bohannon in Richmond and on the Peninsula, and Fritz Burns in Los Angeles. Henry Kaiser, fresh from his success in roads, dams and ships, took the plunge with Kaiser Community Homes, an alliance with Burns. Kaiser took many of his cues from David Bohannon, who built Rollingwood in Richmond during the war for Kaiser’s shipyard workers.99

The new breed of developer was a master of marketing, including the use of Model Homes and arrangement of financing working hand in glove with the federal government and the new crop of government-insured
Savings and Loan Societies. The inclusion of common factory workers and laborers among their customers depended on cheap mortgages. Federal insurance brought the 30-year mortgage into general use, while special protection for savings and loan companies guaranteed an ample pool of capital reserved for housing; postwar interest rates were historically very low thanks to the abundance of funds and lack of debt in that privileged moment in American history.  

Bigger operators worked the flats along the main transport corridors along the Peninsula, down through southern Alameda county, all around San Jose, and up through Sunnyvale and Mt. View. Peninsula examples are Doelger's Broadmore Village (1945) and Westlake (1949-60) in Daly City, Avalon Park in South City; Woodside Terrace in Redwood City (1949) Sunnybrae (1938), Shoreview (1943) and Hillsdale (1940) in San Mateo; Eichler's first tract in Sunnyvale (1947), Greenmeadow and Fairmeadow in Palo Alto (1950-51). The biggest would be Foster City, out in the bay, (1963 onward). The largest community builders included apartments, shopping centers and schools in their plans, along with 500 to 2000 single family homes. Bohannon's Hillsdale was a pioneer in mixed use development, which would maximize the return on a large parcel through density, commercial rents, and a mix of classes. The big developers were always working the margins of the great American 'middle class', the gray area between the upper working class and lower middle class.

By the 1940s, then, even the masses were getting curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, and the grid almost completely disappeared from the new suburban city. Working class tracts, stripped down to minimize costs, would always look more barren and monotonous than those of the upper classes, of course, but the suburban dream lay last a happy mist over the newly planted lawns. The working class in many instances even got incorporated political jurisdictions with a strong class identity: Hayward, Fremont, Campbell, Pinole, Martinez, and so on [get dates of incorporation]. But because towns of a purely working class residential character, like Daly City, Milpitas, Novato or Concord, were rare, the working class was ordinarily dominated by middle class, industrial and merchant interests on town councils and electoral politics generally -- as in San Jose, Sunnyvale, San Leandro, Richmond or Berkeley.

In the 1950s popular writers like William Whyte scorned suburbia for its facelessness -- quite the opposite of the glowing press given to the upper class Romantic suburbs fifty years before. Apparently, the arrival of the working class and their small, unadorned homes had taken the luster off suburbia. Even the sophisticated, inhabitants of the bohemian realm looked down their noses on the minimal homes, as stated famously by Berkeley's Malvina Reynolds in her song "Little Boxes" (sung by Pete Seeger). Yet what made the little boxes of San Francisco and Daly City so ridiculous at first glance was the attempt to maintain the city's tradition of the solid streetscape of undetached or semi-detached row houses at a lower height, with reduced, repetitive styles (an effect that was more charming in upscale areas such as the Marina District). Nor was Modernism much appreciated in small home styling. Eichler was regarded as an oddball and the Modern style was absorbed into the general eclecticism of suburban housing (even Doelger had every fifth house a Modern tilt-roof job). Curiously, the Bay Area's realm of mass suburban housing was never able to break fully with the landscapes of the Victorian, Ecotopian, or sun-drenched Eclectia.

The small home realm of the Bay Area, for all its success, depended on what now seems a fragile balance between a robust center of the class structure and ample profit rates on capital. This balance was already in doubt by 1965, after which the profit-squeeze produced smaller homes and more multiples. Shrinkage of house size accompanied this squeeze, as did feverish efforts to rationalize house building and the layout of large-scale developments; total housing starts fell off by the 1920s and 1960s, as well. The postwar property boom came tumbling down in the recession of 1973-75, when banks and real estate investment trusts toppled like tenpins. Toward the end of the boom, some builders were shedding the small house in favor of higher-profit margins from larger homes, a trend that became a stampede in the 1980s and 90s as builders abandoned the mass of the working class, whose wages were stagnating, and turned to the expanding legions of the revivified upper classes.

The community developers also ran into public opposition as they became bigger and more ambitious. San Francisco Bay was the prime target for development (what could be cheaper land than water?) and was
soon in danger of being filled up entirely by new towns such as Foster City, Redwood Shores and Harbor Bay Isle. (New Jersey’s James Rouse got the most national press for his New Towns, but the greatest number were, once again, to be found in California). These were quickly seen as a bigger affront to environmental sensibilities than Doelger’s humble boxes. From Redwood Shores to Blackhawk, the big developers ran into a wall of environmental protest that brought the Bay Area’s love affair with private profit and unlimited expansion once again into question, and strong growth controls were slapped on bay, coastal and hillside development throughout the region (see chapter 5).

A prosperous economy driven by electronics and finance and property speculation fueled by easy lending in the era of financial deregulation drove housing prices in the Bay Area through the roof. Prices trebled with every pass decade, eroding the foundation for the mass consumption home. Housing costs are the highest of any metropolitan region in the country today, and have been since 1975. The 1978 median price was $84,300. In 1989 it was $261,500. This compares with a national median of $93,500; a California median of $200,800 and a Los Angeles County median of $215,800. In 1999, $xxx,000. Bay Area housing is relatively the least affordable in the nation, with only 10 percent of local households able to buy the median-priced house in 1989, compared with 48 percent nationally and 18 percent in Los Angeles. Things got a bit better in the recession of the 1990s, then the market cranked up again and housing became unaffordable again.

Housing inflation has undermined the position of the working class, especially younger workers. For a while, after 1975, new little homes could still be added to the suburbs in Benicia, Vallejo, Pittsburgh and Antioch, or to eastern San Jose, Milpitas, Union City and Dublin. But by the late 1980s new tract housing had jumped out 50 to 100 miles from San Francisco, into the Central Valley along highway 580 from Tracy to Modesto, up highway 80 to Fairfield and Vacaville, down 101 through Gilroy to Salinas, and north on 101 to Santa Rosa and Cloverdale. Thousands of workers are commuting one to two hours each way in order to find their dream of the single-family detached house in the suburbs. This renders the Bay Area’s historic commitment to mass housing a rather distant memory. Not surprisingly, it corresponds with intensified struggles over rent-control on apartments, condominium conversions, dot-com lofts, and homelessness in the central cities, in the land of multiple dwellings to which we now turn.
Multiples and Urban Density

A relatively neglected residential type in American cities are multiple-unit buildings serving as hotels, apartments, flats, rooming houses, townhouses and condominiums.\textsuperscript{107} Multiples allow the highest density of dwelling and serve as housing for single people, people on the move, the young, the elderly, those of modest means, and non-conforming families. Cutting against the grain of American bourgeois ideals of home, propriety and familialism, they have often been the outcasts of urban housing, denied even the name of "home", cordoned off from fit and proper zones of residence, and targeted for demolition in vast numbers. The multiples and their accompanying way of life have not been an upper class project in the same way as Victorian and suburban homes, and have suffered for their transgressions, yet apartment and hotel districts constitute perhaps the most vital ecology in the urban landscape, and give the inner Bay Area its continuing sense of urbanity.\textsuperscript{108}

San Francisco still has 56\% of its housing units in apartments and flats and 17\% in hotel rooms.\textsuperscript{109} [how about condos?] The city’s reputation as a vital and attractive place rests heavily on its apartment and hotel districts, which fill up the whole of its northeast quadrant (coating the flanks of Nob, Russian and Telegraph hills from the Van Ness corridor east and Market Street north, as well as several blocks south of Market). This is all that most tourists ever see, the charming city of cable cars, street life and public entertainment. Here the building stock consists overwhelmingly of three to six-storied buildings. The Tenderloin boasts the largest concentration of hotels, including both luxury tourist and a multitude of long-term residential hotels, many cheap single-room occupancy lodgings. Chinatown is packed with residential hotels. Residential hotels make up 40\% of the city’s 600-plus hotels.

All this is in addition to the intensive landscape of tourist hotels. In San Francisco these are a major piece of the city’s housing stock, hundreds of hotels and tens of thousands of rooms. The chief tourist clusters are around Union Square and near Fisherman’s Wharf; but there are more in the financial district, west along Van Ness and Lombard, and South of Market, especially around the Convention Center. Dozens of hotels can be found within reach of the San Francisco airport, and a few around Oakland and San Jose airports. Emeryville and Berkeley’s waterfront have a goodly number of hotels. Indeed, high-rise hotels for local business and residential travelers have become a major feature of every highway interchange and commercial site all over the region. [figures for tourist hotels off web]

Downtown Oakland was once rich in hotels, few of which survive. Oakland is also thick with apartment buildings from the 1920s and 1960s, which rim Lake Merritt and the surrounding hillsides. Older single-family housing districts like Adams Point, the Rose Garden and Cleveland Heights have a mix of large homes broken into flats, houses replaced by apartment buildings, and original apartment structures. A few of these are high-rises, some are 20-40 unit monsters on double lots, but many are modest sized fourplexes. A similar mix can be found close to the main transit routes, such as Martin Luther King, International and Park Avenues. Today, multiples are again being built in downtown Oakland and along the waterfront near Jack London Square. Berkeley has much the same mix of structures, especially around the university. The student population has always supported a large number of lodging houses and hotels, and as campus enrollments ballooned after World War II, the town became much denser. It, too, is getting a new wave of apartment/condo building in the downtown.

Every major automobile corridor in the region is blessed with legions of multiples: motels from the 1920s to 50s (now disappearing), slap-up apartments of the 1960s and 70s, and new townhouse/condo/apartment complexes of the 1980s and 90s. In the East Bay, this is the landscape of San Pablo Avenue through Albany, El Cerrito, and Richmond, and down through San Leandro and Hayward. Union City, more recently filled in, is bursting with multiples, and Fremont, too. On the Peninsula these line El Camino Real (except in Atherton and Hillsborough) and the Bayshore freeway. In Marin, the narrow 101 corridor is thick with them from San Rafael to Novato. Silicon Valley is bursting with apartment buildings along its industrial arteries in the flatlands between El Camino and 101, up 17 in Campbell, along 880 and 680 in Fremont and Milpitas, and so on. San Jose is chock-a-block with apartment buildings, condos and townhouses on all its major traffic arteries. [get figures!!]

Today new nodes of residential density are popping up all over the Bay Area in response to rising land values, the squeeze on incomes, and new-found prosperity at suburban nodes serving again as important urban service centers. A striking example is Walnut Creek, the outer east bay’s hub, but central Concord
has been remade in this vein, as has Pleasanton's 580-680 crossing area. In Silicon Valley, there has been a
revival of the little downtowns of Palo Alto, Mt View and Sunnyvale, but most remarkably of San Jose,
with hundreds of new multiples built as a part of the vast redevelopment scheme downtown (see Chapter
6).

Residential hotels and apartments burst on the Bay Area scene in the 1890s. Hotels led the way, with
apartment buildings overtaking them by World War I; in the 1920s apartments passed up single-family
homes in new housing starts, as well (the residential hotel market revived briefly during World War II,
then dried up). From the 1890s to the 1920s, multiples became a major outlet for property investors
operating around the cores of San Francisco and Oakland. George Smith and Edward Rolkin were two San
Francisco capitalists who made millions on hotels, luxury and flophouse, respectively.

Construction of multiple dwellings occurred as part of a general concentration of people, employment and
capital in big cities, but the intensification of central city living in the early 20th century was the product
of four things: the splitting off of corporate offices and the building of skyscrapers; the radial trolley
systems focusing large commuting fields; big department stores concentrating retailing; and mass
immigration fueling garment factories and workshops. At this stage, capitalism was congruent with dense
urbanism.

Inner city multiples served a multitude of workers drawn from three broad classifications: white collar
such as traveling salesmen, clericals in offices and sales women in shops and department stores; factory
workers in sweatshops and workshops close to the core; and migrants and itinerants such as sailors,
dockers, construction tradesmen, and day laborers. San Francisco, as the West's business center and retail
emporium, employed thousands of low-end white collar workers. The city was a major manufacturing
center, as well (see chapter 3), and the central labor depot for the extractive industries of the entire west and
for the Pacific trade routes -- with transient workers returned year after year to the same cheap hotels and
friendly streets. San Francisco has always been a place of transients, tenants and tourists, more than any
other American city.

Because of the holocaust of 1906, the core of San Francisco was entirely remade, more densely than it had
been before, with multiples as the most important building type. These buildings incorporated the latest
standards in construction, utilities and layout. Good apartments offered a scaled-down version of the
modern house, complete with "kitchenette" and full private bath. So many apartments were built at this
time that the fold-away bed in the wall came to be known as 'the Murphy bed' after a San Francisco
company. The smaller buildings on the northern and western flanks of the hills are wood (often stuccoed),
while the larger ones on the southern half of Nob Hill are usually brick. Some of these were of very high
quality, as developers jockeyed for respect with single-family dwellings. Stylistically, many of the
smaller buildings appear to be stripped-down Victorians, thanks to retention of the ubiquitous bay
window, but they are Edwardian (in the chronology of English monarchs).

Hotel and apartment districts are notable for the urban life they support. When one's house is small, as
Paul Groth has observed, home life stretches out along the street: dining in a neighborhood eatery, reading
in a coffee shop, playing in an arcade, going out to the movies. Here lies the everyday substrate for a
public life in urban places, making for congregations of people, assemblages of diverse activities, and the
flow of feet along the pavement. The Great White Ways such as Market, Mission, and Fillmore Streets in
San Francisco -- major commercial streets packed with movie palaces, retail emporia, pool halls, cafeterias
and dance halls -- depended on the traffic from the multiples. Mission Street, Grant Avenue, Upper
Market, and Columbus Avenue still bristle with vitality thanks to dense neighborhoods of Central
Americans, Chinese, Gays and bohemians. For Berkeley, Telegraph, Shattuck, College and Solano
Avenues play the same role. Oakland used to jump along Broadway and Telegraph, or out 7th Street or
East Fourteenth, while today the remaining foot traffic is around the Lake, Chinatown and Fruitvale.
These commercial zones of dense housing, cheap entertainment and public life have served as the great free spaces of the city, the key nodes of urbanism in the sense of promiscuous mingling of diverse people, activities and ideas. They provide the moving panorama enjoyed by Baudelaire's flâneur; the porous spaces in which flourish the experimental lives of the bohemians, or their more recent equivalents, Beatniks, Jazzmen, Hippies, Gays, Punks; and the gathering spots for political rebels and public intellectuals. San Francisco has been particularly rich in such public spaces, and that cannot be separated from its vibrancy, attractiveness, and repeated use as a launching pad for social resistance. In 1910, San Francisco had 25% of its people living in non-family residences, far more than in New York or Chicago. Berkeley has had similar flavor.

But such concentrations of working people, public space and civic freedom have always posed a threat to bourgeois tranquility. A restless working class can periodically erupt, as in the 1870s anti-Chinese mobs, the General Strikes of 1934 and 1946, or the ghetto uprisings of the 1960s. Just as insidious are the young, single, footloose, homosexual, or promiscuous -- in short, all those who do not fit the nuclear family norm. To such people, many of whom are in open flight from the oppressions of family, patriarchy, rural and suburban life, the city offers, ironically, greater privacy, tolerance, and the freedom of public anonymity, whether a sexually liberated youth culture or a commercialized landscape of personal desire. The downtown districts allowed young women, in particular, a measure of liberation they could not find elsewhere; one could even find abortion clinics in early hotels. On the darker side, droves of single men fed an undercurrent of vice associated with alcohol, gambling and prostitution.

Dense urban life has flown in the face of the conservative family values that have been a guiding beacon of American politics from the Jacksonian era to the Age of Reagan, resulting in ritual condemnations by the guardians of order against the dangerous classes, the hobos and homeless, the Barbary Coast and Skid Row, the rowdy commercial thoroughfares. A moral and political counteroffensive began as soon as the hotel and apartment districts went up at the turn of the century, reaching a fever pitch by the flapper era of the 1920s. Progressive Era reformers like Sacramento's Simon Lubin railed against the sins of density and urban popular culture. The pioneer urban sociologists came to the task blinkered by small town ideas of sociability that mistook urban anonymity and energy with alienation and psychological disorders. The early urban planners were similarly blinded by physical determinism and an emphasis on city beautification. Decongestion, the single-family home, and suburban spaces became the moral discourse of 20th century bourgeois urban geography, used to tame capitalism's taste for cities.

Needless to say, apartments were anathema to the upper classes in the new suburbs of the 20th century. 'Snob' zoning became the norm in the upper suburbs of single-family homes, excluding profane apartments and hotels from these sacred spaces of bourgeois consumption. To this day, one can find scarcely an apartment building in Atherton, Hillsborough, Los Altos Hills, Piedmont, Mill Valley, Ross or Orinda, and only a handful in the Berkeley hills, Lafayette, Palo Alto, Kensington or Los Altos. Tracts triumphed over transience.

The Great Depression dealt a body blow to Downtowns built around apartments, hotels, department stores, streetcars, and pedestrian throngs. Investment dried up for the multiples, the movie palaces, the trolley lines and the rest, all of which had been vastly overcapitalized in the 1920s. Manufacturing was devastated, and when it revived, new plants opened up far out in the metropolitan periphery. At the same time, changing labor markets reduced the number of migratory workers in construction, agriculture, forestry, and on the docks. These employment patterns robbed the cheap hotel districts of most of their young, leaving a residue of old men and women, and the mentally infirm, which further lowered the social standing of marginal residential zones.

World War II brought a flood of workers into Bay Area and extended the life of the old, vibrant city, but it also brought more African-American, adding a racist boil to the moral pressure against the promiscuity of human intercourse in the urban setting. The reformers redoubled their efforts to cleanse the city of its slums and to yolk the working classes to home and hearth. Just as the American ruling class declared permanent Cold War on communism it unleashed a war of attrition on the cities of the United States, a war on urbanity, on the poor, on the working class. No explanation in terms of economic forces alone can capture the forces assembled behind suburbanization and against the survival of the central cities in this
country. A class project was launched to undo an epoch of city-building and impose a different moral and spatial order -- just as was done at the dawn of the Victorian and Ecotopian eras -- and those whose plans did not fit this mold would feel the brunt of class power as surely as the victims of the Committees of Vigilance.

The assault on the old downtowns was planned in the 1940s and begun in earnest after 1950. The bulldozers were unleashed with military efficiency on the city's weakest constituencies. Down came the old waterfront dives. Down came Skid Row. Down came half of West Oakland. Down came the Western Addition, after Geary Boulevard and freeway onramps cut it into pieces. Up and over went the concrete traffic jetties over the uncharted sea of working class San Francisco and Oakland. Down came Market Street’s Fox Theater, grandest of all movie palaces. Down went BART into the bowels of the earth, leaving retailers gasping for customers. Down came the tawdry signs of the Path of Gold, and up went proper brick benches and street trees. Down came the heart of Fillmore Street.

This was Modernism at its most destructive. It was high-handed, totalizing in vision, and delighted by the summary execution of the past. But was it rationalist or enlightened? Quite the contrary, it was based on almost total ignorance of the city and its people, moral zealotry of the kind associated with religious fanatics, and reactionary opposition to the liberatory tendencies in the capitalist city. The bourgeoisie, trying to prove that capitalism and the city were not synonymous, tried to kill the downtown to save its soul. Of course, there were liberal and radical Modernist architects and planners who wanted to help the poor and the working class in the cities. These social reformers came up with a new kind of multiple to ameliorate low end housing: the public housing of the 1930s to 1960s. These large-scale Corbusian and International style projects, like Wurster and Church's Valencia Gardens, were generally abortive. This was partly a design failure to address the real conditions of the poor, and partly an inevitable result of the American hostility to the poor and social subsidy.

Miraculously, San Francisco survived the onslaught, thanks largely to the massive, cross-class protest movement against demolition and freeways (see Chapter 1). Chinatown never fell to the wrecker's ball. North Beach provided a home for the Beats, and held off the advancing wall of downtown high-rises (even though the Montgomery Block, bastion of the old bohemians, fell, as did the International Hotel, home of the Hungry i). Bill Graham made the old Fillmore Auditorium into the west coast home of rock and roll. The Hippies took over the derelict Haight, and Dead Heads still abound there. Most Tenderloin hotels still stand, thanks to rent and conversion control, and are now home to a thriving community from southeast Asia. Mission Street's merchants continue to proclaim their wares from a thousand marquees, now in Spanish.

In the East Bay, Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue still gathers together the currents of young ambitions and discontenters by the thousands each day. Oakland's heart was cut out by freeways and redevelopment, but the Chinatown and Lakeshore districts have revived thanks to Asian newcomers and the African-American middle class. Thus, to a surprising degree, the city of multiples lives on in the face of the arch hostility of a 'nation of homeowners.' Despite the postwar supernova of suburban growth, San Francisco and the inner Bay Area retain much of the tradition of living densely, publicly, freely -- of urbanism as a way of life. This is why it feels the most European of any American city.

Out in the postwar suburbs, new forms of multiple housing would come into play, dramatically altering the low-rise landscape of the single-family cities. First, apartments enjoyed another burst of life in the 1960s, when new construction of apartment units caught up with single-family homes again (apartments peaked in 1963 in California, six years earlier than the rest of the country). LA-style "dingbats" were the rage -- drab slabs on sticks with garages underneath, thin walls, poor heating, and doors opening directly onto outside breezeways. Such apartment houses were used to densify former single family neighborhoods, especially in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Jose to house the growing legions of young people striking out on their own. They became a common addition to the commercial and industrial strips of the newer suburbs all around the Bay, as well.

By the 1970s and through the 1980s, the action had shifted to the newly-minted "condominium" and attached "townhouses" with shared common space. This new landscape of multiples began to carpet the
680 corridor, the eastern (expanding) flank of Silicon Valley, the Marin-Sonoma corridor, up highway 80 to Fairfield, and the Highway 4 corridor out through eastern Contra Costa county. These homes were more affordable to workers than detached houses and more appropriate to the still-expanding numbers of singles and single-parent households. They were more socially and financially mainstream than apartments, because they could be bought and sold by individuals. They conformed to the low-rise landscape because they came in two and three stories, and they fit under the new zoning and planning regulations which the community developers altered to allow for Planned Unit Developments (apartments were also included in the mix).

Bay Region architects had a considerable role in establishing the design of the new multiples, both here and in the rest of the United States. Best known is the case of the Moore and Esherick Sea Ranch style of upright, slant-roof, wooden boxes, which "swept across the country [to] become a national condominium vernacular."\(^{124}\) Equally important was the plainer group of attached but offset townhouses and duplexes of the kind found at Hiller Highlands in Berkeley, Marina Village in Alameda, or Foster City. These began as a humble innovation of Don Hardison and Vernon DeMars (with Lawrence Halprin), at Easter Hill in Richmond in the 1950s, intended as a more humane public housing design than the barracks and monolithic styles of the 1930s. Indeed, they became the prototype for low-rise public housing thereafter, as at West Oakland's Acorn project or the Western Addition in the 1960s. But the idea was picked up by architects such as Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Callister and Payne, and Fisher-Friedman for suburban developments, and flourished thereafter at the growing edges of the Bay region, serving a working class public and large scale private developers.\(^{125}\)

The latest incarnation of the suburban multiple comes under the rubric of Smart Growth or the New Urbanism. It is an attempt to recover the urban feel of dense housing, foot traffic, street life, mixed use, and visual variety in large projects. Most examples are 'Transit Villages', in-fill or redevelopment projects near BART or CalTrain stations, like The Crossings in Mountain View, but some have appeared in the far suburbs. Some of its most eloquent practitioners and spokesmen, like Peter Calthorpe, Christopher Alexander and Daniel Solomon, are from the Bay Area (and the Berkeley faculty), where they founded the Congress for a New Urbanism.\(^{126}\) Yet the new urban design is more observed in the breach than in fact. Calthorpe's sweeping plan for the Marin-Sonoma transit corridor failed to get the necessary 2/3 majority from voters in 1998, while Hayward never officially adopted Solomon's dramatic downtown plan. In fact, California in general has lagged in adopting the most innovative planning practices, not doubt due to the conservative political hegemony in the state over the last two decades. Yet many of the older suburbs, like Mountain View and Walnut Creek, have grown up politically and tried to reconfigure in a more urbane mold.\(^{127}\)

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Finally, the multiple came back to the inner city with a vengeance in the 1980s and especially the boom of the late 1990s. New apartment/condo complexes sprang up in San Francisco, as in the South Beach area below Rincon Hill, which replaced warehouses with thousands of new high-rise housing units. But the major residential signifier of the age of the Dot-Coms is the loft. Lofts began as artist live-work spaces carved out of the abandoned warehouses and factories of the old city. They first popped up in the 1970s and spread through San Francisco's south of Market and Mission districts, Emeryville and West Berkeley, and West Oakland, and were strongly associated with the counterculture and co-operative, self-help housing movements. Warehouse recovery caught on for retailing and offices, but was still regarded as trendy and somewhat off-beat. Until the 1990s.\(^{128}\)

Then all hell broke loose. Suddenly people with money, particularly the new wave of Dot-Commers, wanted entry to the urban housing market. They were young and trendy themselves, often only a step away from being struggling artists, and identified with the loft-ethos. But the minted multiples were soon quite at odds with the humble pretensions of old San Francisco apartments and residential hotels. The new lofts transmogrified from simple live-work spaces to elaborate Techno-Moderne condos. Some were installed within the shells of former brick warehouses (like the Oriental Warehouse in South Beach), but many more were put up as purpose-built structures, especially in narrow lots among printing shops and worker flats on the back streets below Market. This was encouraged by the pro-developer Mayordalty of Willie Brown, who lowered building standards to accommodate the rush. Some xx,000 loft units were added to San Francisco, and hundreds more in Berkeley and Oakland.
Architecturally, the high-end multiples show the street lots of corrugated metal, industrial materials, and translucent glass. The David Ireland house in SOMA (1982), all in corrugated cladding, help set the trend. Inside, the Techno-Moderns come very close to commercial interiors in openness, clarity, flexibility, and lighting, with lots of stainless steel, bare walls, high windows and skylights, and track lighting. They bear some relation to the Bay Area tradition, in the right hands, and have been a good staging ground for creative architects like Richard Stacey, Daniel Solomon, Stanley Saitowitz, and Jeremy Kotas, but have a generic industrial modern look that is both refreshing and jarringly L.A. in tone. Certainly, they have evoked a hail of criticism for driving out low-cost housing, real artists, and remaining industrial activity (see chapter 1).  

**Conclusion**

The Bay Area's distinctive aura of urbanity and sub-urbanity sets it off from the run of American cities, including nearby Los Angeles, even though there are many commonalities. This is not a gift of Nature nor the Market, but the outcome of favorable social conditions and fervent struggles. The ecologies indicated here begin to capture the characteristic ways of life of the region and the living tissue of social action and political conflict behind the facades of a static "landscape". My treatment of Pacific coast bohemianism, transient cosmopolitanism and redwood romanticism barely scratches the surface of the region's traditions of political openness, sexual liberation or environmental fervor, for example. Something pleasant and worthy has been carved out here, very often in opposition to the commercial and culture mainstream of America, and this should be understood, cultivated and extended. Yet the Bay Area -- for all its pretensions to ecotopia, cosmopolis and civitas -- is no idyllic retreat from the thundering hoofs of capitalist bulls. It is replete with the massive manor houses of the rich and the Monster Homes of the nouveaux arrivées, the Cook's tour compressed mansions of the middle class, and the bulldozer tract homes of the working class. It has neglected and destroyed all too much of its urban fabric and historic legacy, driven common people away by absurd housing inflation, and sprawled outwards on a scale that rivals Southern California. There is neither much charm, nor inspiration, nor distinctiveness left to all too much of the metropolis.

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1 Stephenson first saw the city in the late 1870s. The term ‘instant city” is due to Barth 1975. The one remnant of the Gold Rush city is the Jackson Square historical district, once filled with notorious Barbary Coast dives.
3 On the early street plans and building, see Moudon 1986.
4 On Victorian architecture, see Waldhorn and Woodbridge 1978, Naverson 1987, Olmsted and Watkins 1969, Maass 1957. On early California and present day Las Vegas, see Findlay 1986. Early houses in the Bay Area, like the Vallejo "Lachryma mosa" in Sonoma, were often prefabricated and brought around the Horn, and were Gothic-Romantic not Victorian, strictly speaking.
5 There was a smattering of other great mansions around San Francisco, such as the Spreckels house on South Van Ness and James Phelan's mansion in the Mission, but all eyes were on Nob Hill. On the Big Four, Lewis 1938. On the Victorian grand manors, Pomoda and Larsen 1989. On 19th century, inequality, see xxxxx. San Francisco had the only group of practicing architects in the West at the time, and their ideas diffused around the region.
On gentrification, see Kucharenko 19xx, Godfrey 19xx. On in-fill Victoriana, see Woodbridge 1988b, 349.

The story of SF’s architectural heritage movement has not been told. Key texts are Vail 1964, Waldhorn 1973, Waldhorn & Woodbridge 1978, and Corbett 1979. No doubt San Francisco was inbued with changing national sentiments about urban and historical preservation signaled by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, but Bay Area activists were among the vanguard.

Wendy Cheng’s photos? What on new suburbia's styles? See also below, last section.


Those 18th century grandees were harking back to earlier traditions of feudal lords, Venetian Counter-reformation merchants and Roman villas. Williams 1977, Cosgrove 1984. See also Chapter 1.


On the subdivision of Peninsula estates, see Burns 1975, Hynding 1983.

Though one might get this impression from most treatments of architecture and garden history, e.g. Streatfield 1994.

website or article on SV.

Bagwell 1982, alameda????, Woodbridge & Woodbridge 19xx. The Heywood home is now the Pusod house, an environmentally sensitive showplace funded by Malou Bailonia, a Phillipino-America woman married to a high tech millionaire (at 1808 Fifth St, near Delaware).

Boyd 1934, Spitz 1997, Mason & Park 1975, Futcher & Conover 1991. Coleman rose from vigilante to Presidential timber by the 1880s, but lost his fortune investing in borax mines. Several big capitalists bought land ranches in Marin and northern Sonoma that were never built on, e.g., Adolph Mailliard, Oscar Shafer and William Crocker.

Inglenook was only one of several magnificent stone chateaux from this period designed by Hamden McIntyre: Far Niente, Chateau Montelena, and Greystone Cellars - built for William Bourn of the Empire Mine and PG&E. Beringer’s Rhine House also dates from this period, as does Chateau Chevalier.

The Jack London debacle is told with due cynicism by Starr 1973. Sam Brannan built the Calistoga Spa in the Napa Valley in the 1850s.

There were pauses in the expansion due to the earthquake of 1906, overinvestment prior to World War I (when many San Francisco capitalists went under), and the pullback after the war (especially 1921) -- but overall it was a time of fulsome growth. (cf. Chapter 3)


On the grand houses of Burlingame Park/Hillsboro/Hillsborough, see Bogart 1991 and Streatfield 1994. Other grandees of Hillsboro included Richard Tobin, Rudolph Spreckels, George Cameron, and Joseph Grant. On the Piedmont elite, see Pattiani 1951. William Randolph Hearst’s San Simeon (1926-40) belongs to the same cohort of estates.

The Mission style originated with the Olmsted-influenced design for Stanford University (which is Mission married to Richardson romanesque) (1888) and Brown and Schweinfurth's California Hall for the Chicago World's Fair (1893). Schweinfurth also did Hacienda del Poso for Phoebe Hearst in Mission style. On the Arroyo Seco group and the Mission revival in Southern California, see Starr 1985, Deverell 19xx, and Anderson, et al., 1974. The Mission Myth also had a northern start with the book Ramona (1886?) by Faxon Atherton's daughter-in-law, Gertrude. Kirker 1973 argues that Mission-Monterey style was just copied from New England, but misses the point that while it was certainly an almagam, it was nonetheless something new.

30 Quotation from Streatfield 1994, 88. See also Gebhard 1985, McMahon 1994. First great axial garden in SoCal was in Montecito, Waldron Gillespie's 'El Fureidis' (1896) in the Islamic/Persian mode. There's nothing as comprehensive about Bay Area gardens at this time as Padilla's 1961 history of Southern California gardens (though French 1993 seems to think there were no Northern gardens at all worth talking about until the 1930s).

31 Dobyns 1931, 15.


33 McDuffie was an early conservationist (see chapter 5) and founding vice-president of the California Conference on City Planning in 1914. On St. Francis Wood, see Brechin 1989. Gray thinks he has an article on Forest Hill and a book on Presidio Terrace.

34 Fishman 1987, Jackson 1985, Stilgoe 1988, Walker 1978. Palo Alto was another wholly planned community of the time, laid out by Leland Stanford and Timothy Hopkins in 1889; but it was a college service town with a commercial center rather than a romantic suburb (it does have a relatively wealthy district along Romantic Suburb lines out University Avenue).[check PA history]

35 Pattiani 1951, Burns 1975. possibly other sources on Atherton in Bancroft.

36 On incorporations, see Markusen 1978, Hoch 19xx, Teaford 1979. (see also chapter 5).

37 Zoning was not invented in New York but in California. It spread rapidly both north and south in the 1910s. The adoption of development regulations was progressive in the sense of rationalizing the installation of utilities, but had the added purposes of class and race exclusion and of trying to contain the overproduction of lots and homes dragging down property values. The spread of regulation is closely tied to the property cycle, which peaked around 1907. Weiss 1986, 1987.

38 Quoted in Woodbridge 1988a, 169.

39 The Germans are given all the credit for Modernism in conventional histories, with Frank Lloyd Wright leading the Americans. In fact, Irving Gill of San Diego and Richard Neutra (an Austrian) had worked up the Bauhaus look by 1910. See Gebhard & Van Breton 1968, Banham 1971, 1986.


The new professionals also enjoyed the patronage of museums for the first time; Church's reputation was made by winning an international prize at the SF Museum of Art in 1937. The naturalistic philosophy espoused by Church echoes that of Maybeck (see below), though both were far from today's idea of ecological balance. On Southern California gardens: "The more flamboyantly hedonist culture of the Southland encouraged an atmosphere of experimentation strikingly different from the Bay Area's tradition idea of harmony with nature". Streatfield 1994, 195.

Woodbridge 1988b, 227, makes this point.

On Blackhawk see xxxx. Gated communities did not catch on in the Bay Area as much as in LA and around the rest of the country, perhaps because of the natural barriers of water and hills the region provides, or perhaps because the black population is smaller. Cf. Blakely & Snyder 1997.


Marin's idea of industry is George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic. After American Graffiti (filmed in Santa Rosa) and Star Wars, George Lucas bought up the entire Lucas Valley in Marin, where his studios continued to blaze cinematic trails in extravagant fantasy.

Conoway 1990.

Hess 1996. [get more on the private houses, including ugly ones in Sonoma]

Francis and Reimann 1999. cf. Streatfield 1994. Thanks also to Louise Mozingo, Department of Landscape Architecture, UC Berkeley, for sharing her insights.

Chappellet 1998. Large gardens still usually show more Italianate symmetry and formality than smaller ones. Native plants and ecological gardening are now widespread across the country.

The nouveaux riches unknowingly recapitulating the 19th century sense of California as the agricultural 'garden of the gods'. cf. Tyrell 1999.


On the new middle class of the time, see Kocka 1980, Sarfatti-Larsen 1977, Lears 1981.

Fishman 1987.

Callenbach 1975, Brautigan 1967, Garreau 1981. Such naturalism is a urban artifice, of course, as pointed out by King 1984, 155: "'nature' had meaning only for city folk living apart from it; 'living simply' made sense only to those with a surfeit of material goods; having a 'simple' informal second home was attractive only to those with a complex, formal city house; raw wood, grass matting and coarse fabrics derived their meaning only in contrast to the elaborate decor, finished materials and consumer luxuries of the urbane city; the 'Great Outdoors' appealed only to those with warmth and comfort within. How could people be different if they had nothing to be different from? Yet, too, the bungalow was also a genuine protest by an artist-intellecutal class, with no great means or second home, against capitalistic materialism.”

See e.g. Berkeley 1900 (get refxx)

Whenever we think of (the Bay Area tradition) we end up with certain common denominators -- they are always houses, they are almost always small in scale, they are above all woody, sheathed in redwood (often inside as well as outside), they suggest a visual mode which is vernacular and anti-urban, they seem to be related to their respective 'place' in the landscape (urban or suburban), and the are generally filled with visual and ideological contradictions." (Gebhard 1988, 8) The Rustic Style was almost never used in commercial building, and only in a few churches and Berkeley campus buildings.


On the Bay Area moderns see, Woodbridge 1988a, Montgomery 1988, Sutro 1994, Sardar 2000. Wurster, Esherick and others were well aware of the legacy of Maybeck, Polk and the earlier generation of Bay Area regionalists.

As, for example, the Dodd House (Wright), GTU Library (Kahn), and Moreley-Baer house (Schindler). Large architectural statements in the Modern styles were more likely to be public buildings, like Frank Lloyd Wright's Marin Civic Center: a pink ocean liner with a blue roof moored in the hills north of San Rafael.

Several local artists formed a short-lived Guild for Arts and Crafts, while Keeler started a Ruskin Club in Berkeley. Freudenheim & Sussman 19xx, Brechin 1984. Cultivated rusticity also triumphed over beaux-arts neoclassicism of the sort embodied in an 1895 plan to make the University campus into a "City of Learning" and Berkeley into the Athens of the West -- an idea dreamed up, ironically enough, by the fertile imagination of the young Maybeck. The Greek revival plan was promoted by the Hellenophilic President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, and paid for by the philanthropist Phoebe Hearst out of her late husband's mining fortune. The core of the Berkeley campus is one of the best formal Beaux-Arts ensembles in the United States, but outside the core, anything goes. Soon the campus reverted to the melange of Greek, Italian Renaissance and redwood edifices that typified suburban home building through the 1920s. On the campus plan, see Partridge 1978, Brechin 1984, Longstreth 1983, Wollenberg 1985.

My thanks to Gray Brechin for the story of Russian Hill. Also Woodbridge 1988b.

On Carmel, see Walker 1973.

"By virtue of its hilly landscape, its redwood forests and eucalyptus groves, its wayward coastline, and its liberally bohemianized population, the peninsula of Southern Marin has attracted imaginative people from all over the world. Unless I am mistaken or
bewitched, I would judge that during the past twenty years it has also become a powerful spiritual center of the nation...” Watts 1972, no idea what page...... Also, Saroyan 1979, Rafael 1974.

74 Eichler & Kaplan 1967, Eichler 1982, Weiss 1987, 40. Doucet and Weaver 1991 argue that integrated mass production had appeared in places by 1900, but the generalization of the community builder only came later.

75 what?? (asked Del)

76 McLaren 1909, Wickson 1915, Dobyns 1931. See also Lyon 1897, Angier 1906, Bissell 1926, Murmann 1914, Mitchell 1932 -- those these all came out of Southern California.

77 For a close study of the differences, see Burns 1975.


80 The beleaguered city of Oakland set up a well-functioning One-Stop Permit center for the fire zone, which effectively negated design review (despite pretenses to the contrary). For expressions of concern about the visual overhaul of the fire area, see the indigenous Phoenix Journal vol. 2(8) and various issues. [See Supt Ct decisions in South Carolina beaches and Tahoe case now up.... -- who's written on that? Longtin 1999.


82 See, e.g., Bill Owens' 1973 photographic study of Livermore, in the outer East Bay. For a snapshot of the class distribution across different jurisdictions c. 1965, see Feldman 1981.

83 On Los Angeles, see Fogelson 1967. San Francisco homeownership in 1910 was 38%, compared to 20% in New York and 26% in Chicago (data from 1910 Manuscript Census, thanks to Phil Ethington, History, University of Southern California). On Oakland see chapter 4.

84 These gross breakdowns are complicated by a microscatter of tracts. See, e.g., Burns 1975. Though in large degree the working class got the flatlands and the upper classes the hills, there are places where the pattern is reversed, like Potrero Hill and the bayside hills of Pinole, or the flatland wealth of Atherton or the Marina district.

85 On the history of homeownership, see Perin 1977, Blackmar 1989, Doucet and Weaver 1991 and Harris and Hamnett 1987. Family-owned small homes have been prevalent in small towns and some cities like Baltimore since the 19th century. Nationally, the leading urban homeowner group by 1900 was the rising professionals, with skilled workers next and common laborers lagging well behind until after World War II. By English standards, however, homeownership rates among the US working class were already very high -- 25-40% -- in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Rates vary dramatically over time and by class, with ground gained and lost quickly (see, e.g., the detailed figures for Hamilton, Ontario, in Doucet and Weaver, table 7.7).

86 Florida and Feldman 1988. Postwar prosperity and federal policies generated extraordinarily high ownership rates by the 1960s (close to 70%), but

Bungalows are often equated, wrongly, with Craftsman style and homes for the well-to-do, when most were neither.

Keeler and Maybeck were radicals by the standard of downtown lawyers, but still elite reformers. cf. Montgomery 1988, 229.


Los Angeles builders were, overall, the most advanced in subcontracting and the complex of building materials suppliers was largely self-contained. Kaiser Homes, in particular, led the way in rationalizing mass construction. California had a definite advantage in year-round work that kept capital turning over. Weiss 1987, Hise 1997.


On Eichler see Montgomery 1988 (quote from p 251). Eichler and Kaplan 1967 (sic?), Ditto et al c 2000. (Bohannon oral history?)

For the Levitt-centered view, see Eichler 1982, Jackson 1985. On Doelger, see Brechin 1990, who claims that Doelger was the biggest homebuilder in the country before Levitt. On Burns and Kaiser, Hise 1997.


Burns 1975, Hynding 1983. [Are there studies of mass developers elsewhere, like San Jose or south Alameda????? Must be something on San Jose!! ask the old planning director or architect] Steinberg 2002.

This class ambiguity led many observers to identify suburbia with the Great Middle Class, but a few sharp studies put paid to the illusion that suburbanization had erased class. Berger 1962.

It must be said that Doelger gave little regard to nature, building tracts right on the bluffs where the San Andreas Fault plunges into the sea and the ground is wrenching beneath the rows of little houses. Brechin 1999, McPhee 1993.

On this housing shift and the passing of the first generation of merchant builders by the 1973-75 recession, see Eichler 1982. Poor Joe Eichler worked on San Francisco apartments before going bankrupt and dying in 1974.

On the first property long wave, see Weiss 1987, Maverick 1932. On the postwar building boom, see Grebler & Burns 1982, Suburban Apartment Boom 19xx. Evidence suggests that the same late boom in apartments can be found in the Victorian era, too.

Figures from the Federal Home Loan Bank Board and California Association of Realtors.

A hotel offers rooms by the day, week or month, often with shared baths, toilets and dining rooms, and has on-site management and services (except in the cheapest
Apartments have their own bathrooms and kitchens (or kitchenettes) and often separate entrances. Flats are rental units carved out of houses, usually occupying a floor each. Small establishments were generally known as lodging houses before World War I, rooming houses later. Condominiums are apartments for sale, with certain collective agreements for building maintenance. Townhouses are upright small houses in series (sharing common walls).


Of 280,000 units, 156,000 are apartments, 28,000 tourist hotel rooms and 19,000 residential hotel rooms. Data from SF Planning Department. Hotel rooms peaked around 1915, when there were 65,000 in all.

Most rentals before that time were rooming and boarding houses, often in the homes of workers and widows. South of Market and the Western Addition used to count scores of working class rooming houses, but most were not rebuilt after the 1906 inferno (where the death of thousands was quietly hushed up so the city could be quickly rebuilt). Ironically, the Victorian single family neighborhoods lying just outside the fire line (the Western Addition, Hayes Valley and the Haight-Ashbury) were utterly transformed in the aftermath of the fire because of the housing shortage: most were rapidly subdivided into flats.


Residential density at the urban core is by no means the natural order of capitalist cities, despite what conventional urban rent theory might make one think. Downtowns were less dense in the 19th century and would become so again after World War II. Indeed, quite a number of American cities function quite well today with negligible downtowns -- Phoenix, Buffalo, and San Diego, for example.

On the growing numbers of women in sales and clerical work downtown, see Benson 1986, Davies 1982, Rotella 1981. There is not, to my knowledge, any comprehensive book on migratory labor in the west. Nineteenth century observers remarked on the large number of people living in hotels and eating in restaurants, but the numbers do not exist to prove the case. The number of rooming houses in 1900 was higher than in most eastern cities, as was the case throughout the west, and the figures for multiples remain high right through the 20th century. Groth 1994. Also Averbach 1973.

On working women in the city, see Meyerowitz 1983.

Jacoby 1987 makes a compelling case against the loss of such urban spaces. Data from 1910 manuscript census, thanks to Phil Ethington, History Department, University of Southern California. Conversely, 95% of San Francisco homeowners (living mostly in the outer districts of small homes) were married and 81% had children in 1900. Groth 1994. The nicer areas of flats also tend to be family-oriented.


The professional language on urbanism was replete with terms of censure for areas of forbidden housing: "urban blight" where single-family homes had been turned into rental housing, "the slum" for working class and immigrant neighborhoods, "zone of transition" for the hotel and apartment districts, and "congestion" as the central ill of the
teeming city. When the crucial Conference on Housing and Home Ownership of 1930, called by President Hoover to determine urban policy, cited cheap hotels and entertainment districts as their chief example of "urban blight". On the tenor of US urban reform over the years, Walker 1977, Fischler 1993 (book?), Beauregard 1993.

No one, to my knowledge, has worked out the economic changes in the urban base in the 1930s and 40s. (Johns?) On changes in Federal urban policy, see Gelfand 1975 and Walker 1977. On the new homelessness, see Eckert 1980, Hoch and Slayton 1989, Dear and Wolch 1987.

On the destruction of San Francisco and Oakland, see Hartman 1984 and Hayes 1972. A key planning document was the work of the estimable Mel Scott, later to regret his role. See Scott 1947. For a more upbeat view of urban renewal, see Teaford 1990.

See Berman 1982 on modernity, urban renewal and the bourgeois fear of dealing with the devil (from Goethe's Faust onward).

As had happened in the 1920s, the end of a long wave of urban growth saw standalone houses do best in the early years, only to be overtaken by apartments. Investment in multiples came in waves that were sharper and shorter than upturns in the construction of single-family houses, however. Changing tax laws augmented the phenomenon. On economy-wide movements of the profit rate, see Duménil and Lévy 1993 and Brenner 1998.

Kaufman and Broad broke into LA with these, while George McKeon of Sacramento blanketed the state with four-plex condos. Source on condos?

Montgomery 1988, 230.

Montgomery 1988.


On the urbanization of the suburbs, see McGovern 1994, Garreau 1991, Teaford 1997. On the other hand, there are some who view the densification of the suburbs as a threat to the central city. Stanback 1991.

New York had already gone through a similar loft gentrification in the 1980s. Zukin 1982.

REFERENCES


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