

INSIDE TRACTS

Caltrans study targets state's significant mid-century tracts

Growing older does have its rewards, and some of them are coming to mid-century neighborhoods throughout the state. California's Department of Transportation is beginning to study postwar tracts to determine which are most historically and architecturally significant. The findings will prove useful when planning highway routes and improvements—and should make fascinating reading.

"The Bay Area chapter will definitely discuss the Eichler tracts, Henry Doelger and Westlake, David Bohannon and San Lorenzo Village, and others," says Andy Hope, an architectural historian with Caltrans. "The Sacramento chapter will discuss the Streng tracts, Bohannon's North Highlands development, and others." Hope expects to have a draft in 2010.

Preservationists to take a hard look at leisure—in Palm Springs

Preservationists and architects from throughout the state will flock to Palm Springs in April 2009 to consider "The Culture of Leisure: Re-thinking the California Dream," the theme of the California Preservation Foundation's annual conference.

The conference is California's largest gathering of preservationists, attracting professionals, neighborhood activists, and students for dozens of tours, workshops, seminars, dinners, and socializing. The foundation is seeking proposals for programs. The event will run April 16-19. For information visit online at california-preservation.org, or call 415-495-0349.

Palo Alto preservationists honor Eichlers through award and tour

Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST),

will promote green living on Earth Day weekend, April 24 and 25, with its "San Mateo Highlands Eichler Home Tour 2009: Green Innovations - Solutions for Remodeling Today."

The tour will feature 10-12 homes, including one that is almost completely original, says Linda Siguenza, an organizer. The event will also include a trade show displaying sustainable hardwood flooring, alternate energy, energy-conserving roofing, and electric cars.

The tour, which benefits Highlands Elementary School, is priced at \$35 per person (\$40 after March 15), and is likely to sell out. A catered lunch costs extra. For information, visit eichlerhometour.org, or e-mail info@eichlerhometour.com.

Neutra news surging statewide

Efforts to preserve and celebrate houses designed by Richard Neutra, the pioneering California modernist by way of Vienna, are continuing on several fronts.

In Los Altos, a hilly enclave in Santa Clara County, one of Neutra's "Three Small Houses in an Orchard," as they were dubbed in 1939, has been restored as a state-of-the-art conference center.

The Los Altos Community Foundation, which is overseeing the project, will also use the Johnson house, the restored Neutra, for exhibits devoted to modern architecture.



RESTORED. Neutra's Johnson house in Los Altos.

the tours and reception, \$40. For tickets visit neutrahouse.org, or e-mail neutra@los-altos.org, or call the foundation.

In Los Angeles, another Neutra house has taken to the road to escape demolition. The 1941 Maxwell house was disassembled into sections, then hauled from Brentwood, where its owners wanted a much larger house, to Angelino Heights, a neighborhood better known for grand Victorians. The home's preservation is due in part to pressure by the Los Angeles Conservancy, which succeeded in having the house named a city historic-cultural landmark.

The owner, Princess Bovanna, plans a full restoration and hopes to host a Neutra celebration when the project is complete.

Also in Los Angeles, efforts are underway to raise funds to restore Neutra's pioneering VDL Research House, which the architect used as his home and studio. The home, owned by Cal State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and open to the public, needs to amass \$1 million for repairs and operations. For information, visit neutra.vdl.org. The house is at 2300 Silver Lake Boulevard.

And in Palm Springs, the announced sale of Neutra's recently restored Kaufmann house fell through in May, after it was auctioned off at Christies for \$16.8 million. The "contract was terminated by the seller by reason of a breach of terms by the buyer," according to Christies.

Julius Shulman hits the silver screen

Camermen recently have been aiming their lenses at Julius Shulman, who has been photographing modern homes for more than 70 years. Shulman, 98, still working and feisty as ever, is the subject of two recent films.

Tiki complex seeks its place in history

Royal Hawaiian Estates, a 40-unit tiki-themed condo in Palm Springs, may become the first community in the city to win historic designation. The complex, with its prow-shaped gables and prow-shaped pool—guarded by Tikis—has lost some of its architectural detailing over the years and doesn't want to lose anymore, says Harriet Baron, a leader of the landmarking effort.

The architectural and landscape committee of the Estates' homeowners



TIKI. Palm Springs' Royal Hawaiian 'historic'-bound?

association is seeking class-one historic site designation from the city. If all goes well, the designation could be granted in 2009, Baron says.

The complex was designed by the renowned local firm Wexler and Harrison; Don Wexler has said it was designed by his late partner, Rick Harrison. The complex is much loved, Baron says. "Amongst the residents, there is an absorbing affection."

Eichler Swim Club celebrates 50th

The Eichler Swim and Tennis Club of Palo Alto, built by Joe Eichler in 1958 as part of his Palo Verde neighborhood, was looking good for its recently celebrated 50th anniversary. The club, which has 300 families, celebrated its anniversary in September with a pool