

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House**

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number **6 Great oak Circle** NA not for publication

city or town **Orinda** NA vicinity

state **California** code **CA** county **Contra Costa** code **019** zip code **94563**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Steph A. Hulse **DSX100** **10/2/06**
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Edson A. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action **12-12-06**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
		sites
1	9	structures
		objects
4	10	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement
Other: Usonian House

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof composition
walls wood, concrete block
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Blank lines for entering architectural categories.

Period of Significance

1949

Blank lines for entering additional period information.

Significant Dates

1949

Blank lines for entering additional significant dates.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Blank lines for entering additional cultural affiliation information.

Architect/Builder

Wright, Frank Lloyd

Blank lines for entering additional architect/builder information.

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Blank line for entering the name of the repository.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	573200	4190800	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Roland

organization Roland Nawi Associates date May 8, 2006

street & number 956 Fremont Way telephone 916-441-6063

city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95818

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name Katherine Buehler

street & number 6 Great Oak Circle telephone NA

city or town Orinda state CA zip code 92563

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Description:

The Maynard and Katherine Buehler house is a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian style house located in Orinda, California, a small suburban community east of Oakland. One of the first houses of this type that Wright built in California, the house is a superb example of the architect's late residential work. L-shape in plan, the house is "zoned" into three distinctive areas, the core family area on the west side of the building which includes the living and dining rooms and kitchen, the central wing with the bedrooms and baths, and at the east end of the building, the large workshop. The building is set on a gravel foundation. Much of the house is steel frame with wood panel cladding, while other portions, predominantly the workshop and carport, are concrete block. The roof is flat and multi-level with wide eave overhangs and a prominent fascia. The living room has a slanted ceiling which rises from a low point at the entry to one and one-half story at the rear windows. The front elevation is plain with a clerestory that runs its full length. Double entry doors are located at the west end of the front wall. Windows at the rear of the house are vertically emphasized with extensive fenestration characterizing all of the rear elevations except the workshop. A concrete terrace, an extension of the interior floor, runs along the outside of the dining room and bedroom wing providing a transition between the house and the swimming pool. The house was initially sited on a one acre lot, which has now been expanded to include two adjacent parcels. The focal point of the site is a year-around creek which serves as the center piece of a large formal Japanese garden. There are two small buildings, a guest house and a playhouse, located near the house. A small glass and wood nursery frame sits to the east of the playhouse. There are several large structures associated with the garden including a gazebo, a Tea House, and five bridges. A utility area in the southeast corner of the entry drive contains a two-car carport, with two storage sheds set to the rear and west of it. It retains its integrity. The house has been carefully rehabilitated with only minor changes despite a devastating fire in 1994 that destroyed much of the bedroom wing.

Wright experimented with several different floor plans for the Usonian houses. Wright scholar, John Sergeant, was the first to develop a classification for these plans, dividing them into six basic types. Within Sergeant's classification system the Buehler House is what he calls a "polliwog" plan. This was either an L-shape or T-shape arrangement in which there is a large "head" at one end of the house, usually containing the living room or central living area, with either one or two "tails" or wings extending outward. This was the ground plan that Wright employed in the first Usonian house, the Jacobs House in Madison, and was the most frequently repeated plan among his Usonian houses. The Buehler plan is L-shape with a large hexagonal room on the west side and a long L-wing extending east that contains the bedrooms and Maynard Buehler's shop. Like all Usonian houses, the Buehler residence is laid out on a grid system inscribed in the concrete floor and delineated on the working drawings (see Buehler House Drawings, Sheet 2). Throughout the house the floor is made of concrete plates colored the characteristic red that Wright used in a majority of his houses.

The house has a multi-layer flat roof with broadly extended eaves. The eaves have a mitred wooden soffit and are finished with a wide fascia. Over the hexagonal living room the roof is slanted and rises several feet from the north to the south side. On the exterior this gives the side of the house a sweeping profile.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

The effect in the interior is to create a dramatic space which appears to move outward into the yard beyond the floor to ceiling window walls on the south sides of the living room

Access to the house from the street is via a large paved area, part of the Wright plan, with the attached carport mediating between the house and the street. Flat roofed, the carport is open on two sides, supported on the north and west by the walls of the house, with a squared column on the north side that guides entry to the front walkway. The large cement block chimney of the workshop rises above the carport roof on the south.

The front elevation of the house is formed by the north wall of the bedroom wing. Even though the Buehler house is situated on its lot so that the front of the house faces the creek ravine and not the street, the front elevation presents a characteristic blank wood batten face to the public. A clerestory of cut wood screened windows lies immediately below the wide eaves which shelter the walkway. The entry to the house is at the west end of the front wall, accessed by a long narrow walk from the entry drive and carport. The walk is bordered by a low concrete wall. The entry itself consists of double full-length glazed doors with recessed sidelights. Both the doors and sidelights have leaded linear mullions at the top and bottom. The hexagonal living room projects outward at the end of the entry wall, but the small fenestration on its front portion functions to limit views into the house and to maintain the strong sense of privacy established by the wooden front wall.

The rear elevation is the most important façade of the building. Unlike the guarded entry facade, the rear elevation consists primarily of glass walls opening out to the sloping yard and the creek. The rear of the house realizes Wright's goal of integrating interior and exterior space and placing the house in nature. As the window openings of the living room progress from the front to the rear they gradually increase in size. On the south side of the room they encompass the full vertical length from the raised ceiling to the top of the banquettes arranged along the outer wall. The adjacent dining room is almost entirely glass and blends imperceptibly into the terrace. As Wright designed this space, it also had a coffered glass ceiling, although the glass panels have now been replaced with gold leafed wooden panels. In the long bedroom wing each room has floor to ceiling ribbons of windows and glazed doors which open directly onto the terrace and swimming pool. Although the glass wall is typical of Mid-Century Modernism, the use of wooden window and door casings and wood cladding of the interior and exterior is specific to Wright and expresses his belief in the importance of natural, organic materials.

The east end of the L-plan is occupied by Maynard Buehler's workshop. Constructed primarily of concrete blocks it has high walls with a clerestory along the entire west side. A private space designed for the use of the engineer/inventor, it is visually set apart from the family living space by the change in materials, and like the front entry, its façade indicates that it is not available to ready public access. The rectangular space is cut by a high semi-circular wall that is both interior and exterior. On the interior it separates the office from the mechanical shop and on the exterior projects outward, varying the otherwise linear wall. Wright had explored this arrangement of a shop near the carport in the Christie House (New Jersey) and in the Baird House (Massachusetts) in 1940. According to Bob Ray, Maynard's long-time

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

business partner, and to Richard Matsutani, the son of garden designer, Henry Matsutani, this was a much used and valued space where Buehler thought through many of the concepts that resulted in the several patents that he held.

The interior of the house is consistent with Wright's goals of creating a small, informal house in which functions were not necessarily segregated into separate enclosed spaces. The hexagonal living room is clearly the center of the house, the largest and most dramatic space. With its light, views and large hearth it is a natural gathering place. The slanted ceiling is gold leaf which catches and reflects the ample natural light. Soffits in natural wood finish run around the periphery of the ceiling at the top of the windows. The living room opens into a separate dining area, unusual in the Usonian house. The kitchen, or as Wright called it, the "workspace" is small and compact, and sits at the core of the house adjacent to the living and dining area. Built-in wooden cabinets line the upper walls and the area below the red linoleum counter. On the west wall a built-in table extends partially into the living room. Between the kitchen and the dining room a large opening, or pass-through, permits a flow of conversation and food between the two spaces. The kitchen is lighted by a skylight and clerestory.

A narrow, low hallway provides access to the bedroom wing. A bathroom, study, children's room and master bedroom with bath are arrayed along its length. These rooms are modest in size with built-in closets and some other furnishings. The outer wall of the hall is lined with built-in bookshelves below the clerestory that provides natural light to the space. These spaces are unelaborated, leading Mrs. Buehler to say on more than one occasion that "Wright did not care diddly about bedrooms."¹

Only very minor changes were made to the house prior to 1994. The most significant of these was the replacement of Wright's original glazed panels in the dining room ceiling. In Wright's original design both the walls and ceiling of the dining area were glass. However, this proved impractical as it greatly magnified the summer heat on the south-facing room. The Buehler's replaced the glass ceiling panels with celltex and finished the panels with the same gold leaf finish as that of the living room ceiling. This was accomplished shortly after the house was completed.

In 1994, due to a malfunctioning space heater, a fire swept through the bedroom wing of the house. The bedrooms and hallway were badly damaged and smoke and water damage was found in parts of the house not directly affected by the fire. Only the workshop escaped without any damage.

The rehabilitation of the house, which took place between 1995-1997, very closely followed the original Wright plans. Some changes were made in the interior arrangement of the bedroom wing. The master bedroom was expanded to include a large dressing room and wardrobe space for Mrs. Buehler and the master bath was slightly enlarged. This expansion was accomplished by moving the wall partition between the master and "children's" bedroom a few feet to the west. At the same time the partition wall between of the children's room and the study was moved east to enlarge the latter space into a guest room.

¹ Katherine Buehler, personal communication, April 12, 2006.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

This rearrangement of the internal partitions between the three adjacent rooms created only a minor alteration to the exterior in which one of the rear bedroom double doors was eliminated. Small adjustments also were made in the kitchen with the sink repositioned along the counter top and the stove moved from the west kitchen wall to a space previously occupied by a freezer. The location of the basement stair was changed.

Throughout the rehabilitation substantial attention was paid to the replication of details, including securing redwood of similar grain and quality to that used in the original construction. Cladding was assembled into "panels" consistent with Wright's original, and unique, cladding system. Wood patterned window screens were exactly replicated. Kitchen cabinets were taken down, sanded and refinished. However, the knobs which were lost due to the fire were replaced with Buehler mounts, the small ring that forms an integral part of the Buehler scope mount mechanism. The celltex ceiling panels in the dining area were replaced and the new wood panels finished with gold leaf. The living room ceiling was also refinished with gold leaf matching the original.

Only exterior and interior materials that were not salvageable were replaced. Where replacement was unavoidable it was done in-kind, based on the original drawings and specifications. In both cases the treatments conform with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation. The interior changes related to the children's and master bedrooms made alterations in secondary spaces within the house and did not alter the original position of the rooms in relation to the hall or exterior rear wall dimensions.

In 1947-1948, Walter Olds, then a Taliesin apprentice, supervised the construction of the Buehler House as well as the V.C. Morris Gift Store in San Francisco. Following the fire, the Buehler's engaged Olds, who had remained their life-long friend, and was by then practicing with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, to oversee the rehabilitation. The participation of Walter Olds in both the original construction supervision and in the subsequent rehabilitation of the fire damaged house provided an unusual degree of continuity in the replacement and repair work that is rare in any rehabilitation. Olds close communication with Wright during the building of the house in 1948-1949 put him in a unique position to understand Wright's intentions in regard to the house.

While he implemented the interior changes the Buehler's wanted in the bedrooms, he worked almost exclusively from Wright's original plans. The remarkable circumstance of Olds' double involvement with the house was highlighted in both the National Trust's *Preservation News* and the *New York Times*.² Despite minor alterations, the integrity of materials, design, workmanship, setting, location, feeling and association remains the same as it was when the house was originally constructed. The small changes in rooms and dimensions are not visually discernable. The *Preservation News* and *New York Times* articles both praised the careful attention to detail and the Buehler's determination to save the house.

² Freeman, Allen "Wright Again," *Preservation*, Sept-October 1997, 68. ; Brown, Patricia Lee. *NY Times*, Thursday, February 13, 2003, 1 and 13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

The Guest House and Playhouse

In the early 1950s, shortly after the completion of the Wright house, the Buehler's employed Walter Olds to design a compatible guest house overlooking the newly acquired property on the south side of the creek. They also asked him to build a small playhouse for their daughters.

The Guest House is a simple rectangular plan building with a low gable roof. It is sited on the rear slope above the creek and the north side of the building opens onto the pool terrace. It is one and one-half story with the lower portion of the building serving as a wine cellar that housed Maynard Buehler's large collection of fine wines. The upper portion of the building contains a living/sleeping room with a concrete block fireplace, a narrow utility kitchen and a bathroom with a small room behind it. Fenestration consists of sliding aluminum doors on the north and west elevations and a large plate glass window on the south which commands a spectacular view of the garden. An elevated deck or viewing platform is found on the west elevation off the sliding door and overlooks the gazebo and waterfall pond.

The Guest House was designed by Olds to complement the main house without detracting from it. Its scale and form make clear its auxiliary status. It is a simple modernist design utilizing the same cladding system and materials as the Wright house. It is set away from the house sufficiently that it reads as a separate structure, but close enough that it functions well for the purposes intended by the Buehlers. Beyond the practical consideration of over night visitors, the guest house has a spectacular overview of the garden and serves as a sheltered intermediary between house and garden. According to Katherine Buehler it was often used for serving wine prior to retiring to the house for dinner.

Like the Guest House, the Playhouse was intended to be a minor and complimentary structure for the Wright house. In this building, Olds utilized the same concrete block that is employed in the workshop wing of the house. The playhouse is closely adjacent to this wing and blends well, at the same time that it maintains a distinct identity. The building is rectangular with a shed roof and a side entry. According to Katherine Buehler, Maynard built child-size furniture for the house.³ It now is used for storage.

Neither of these small auxiliary buildings has been altered. They retain their original design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, and association. Although very simple, these buildings were designed specifically to compliment the Wright house and to provide additional space for the Buehler family without intruding on, or altering Wright's design. The employment of Olds as the architect was a direct result of his involvement with the construction of the house a few years earlier and because of the Buehler's confidence that he understood and appreciated the importance of house they had commissioned from Wright.

³ Katherine Buehler, personal communication, April 12, 2006.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Because the buildings were constructed shortly after the house, were designed by Olds with his intimate connection to the original construction and because of the design intent and compatibility of materials, the Guest House and Playhouse contribute to the significance of the property.

The Swimming Pool

Swimming pools were a common element accompanying Wright's California Usonian houses, often in close proximity to the house. This may have been a reflection of Wright's emphasis on the integration of the interior and exterior space, as well as an expression of his ideas concerning the informality of family life and entertaining. Private pools, once a luxury of the wealthy, became a popular middle-class amenity in the immediate post-WWII period when the Buehler house was built.

The pool appears on the Wright plan as a geometric form, but it was altered during the original construction to incorporate an arced wall on the southwest end. This arc mirrored the form of the interior/exterior wall in Maynard's workshop. The shape of the pool can be clearly seen in a 1951 photograph of Maynard Buehler's (Figure 1) and in Scott Zimmerman's 1983 photo (Figure 2) which appears in David Gebhardt's *Romanza*. The pool remains intact, although it has been converted to a Koi pond through the installation of large boulders, plant materials, and stone and wood Japanese lanterns.

Glass House, Storage Sheds and Carport

The glass house is a small structure with a wood sill foundation and industrial glass walls and shed roof. It is approximately four feet high. The purpose of the structure is for potting plants and protecting tender young plants. It is directly east of the Playhouse.

There are two portable, prefabricated utility sheds located at the rear of the entry drive area. The larger of these was brought onto the property during the fire rehabilitation work to store building materials. It was retained after the completion of construction to use for storage. These buildings are relatively inconspicuous and are surrounded by heavy vegetation.

An additional carport, essentially a corrugated plastic roof supported on 4X4 posts, was added to the southeast end of the paved entry area to accommodate Maynard Buehler's collection of vintage automobiles. The additional carport is not attached to the house although it abuts the eaves of the workshop on the east side of the that wing.

None of these structures is fifty years old, nor do they possess any architectural merit or historic significance.

The Japanese Garden

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

In the 1950s as Orinda began to develop into a more densely populated commuter suburb of San Francisco, the Buehler's acquired two lots to the south of their house. Their objective was to protect their privacy and retain the setting of the house. The lots extended the property to Moraga Road, beyond the creek, which had originally formed the southern boundary of the property, adding approximately two acres to the site.

The original landscape was naturalized along the steeply sloped area in front of the house. In addition to designing the swimming pool, Wright focused on the creek as a central feature of the rear yard and had the abrupt drop-off of the natural slope graded to facilitate views of the watercourse from the living room.⁴ The graded slope was landscaped with lawn and trees, some planted and others trees native to the site. The appearance of the yard in the early 1950s is documented in a photograph taken by Maynard Buehler (Figure 1).

In the 1960s the Buehlers began to develop a traditional Japanese garden with Henry Matsutani, an important Bay Area landscape designer, noted for his Japanese gardens. The garden eventually occupied the full 3 acre property, including the swimming pool. As it exists today, it is a large formal garden with extensive plantings and number of related structures including several bridges, a hexagonal gazebo, and a tea house.

Henry Matsutani designed the garden over several years. He developed a close personal relationship with the Buehlers and the garden evolved as a joint collaboration. Although the garden maintains the basic form and structure of a traditional Shin Garden intended for viewing, individual features were added over time.⁵ Matsutani studied Japanese gardens in Japan and worked with the head gardener of the Japanese Imperial Gardens. He is associated with the 1960s rehabilitation of the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park and the design of the Moon Viewing Garden in the Strybing Arboretum in San Francisco, as well as a number of public and private gardens.

The major components of the garden include the creek which serves as a central organizing focus. Matsutani diverted water from the creek to create a large pond which is accessed by an arched bridge. The pond is lined with rock. An 8' high waterfall cascades over field stones into the pond from the level of the gazebo. Part of the pond and creek are filled with iris which provide an elegant spring showing. Just above the waterfall there is a gazebo which can be used for serving tea and viewing the pond or the western glade.

The western glade is a large circular area of lawn defined by a 3' curvilinear gray granite pathway. The open lawn area has a long wooden bench from which one can view the tea house to the east, look back north to the pond, creek, and house, or view the more naturalized western edge of the garden. Two 8' statues are located in this glade.

⁴ Walter Olds . personal communication, April 12, 2006.

⁵ Richard Matsutani, personal communication, April 25, 2006.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

A traditional sukiya-style tea house is located in the southeast corner of the property. It is set on a platform and surrounded on two sides by a low wooden wall. The tea house is reached from a path of gray aggregate over an arched concrete bridge across a Zen dry bed creek. The area around the tea house exhibits some very large and old native oak trees.

Closer to the house, a rock garden is located at the southeast edge of the swimming pool. This garden, which is shown in David Gebhard's book, *Romanza: the California Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, may have been one of the first portions of the garden that was constructed. It preceded the adjacent Koi pond which has now occupies the swimming pool. After the Buehler's children left home the pool was used very little, leading Henry Matsutani to suggest that it could be converted to a Koi pond as a part of the Japanese garden. In an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle in 1995, Matsutani discussed the problems of integrating elements such as terraces and swimming pools with the requirements of a traditional Japanese landscape.⁶ In this case he eventually integrated the pool into the garden by transforming its usage.

The garden is enclosed by a high wooden fence around the perimeter of the property. It is further screened from public view by plantings of redwood trees.

Although developed in the 1960s and 1970s with some elements of the garden added even later, the garden provides a major landscape setting for the Wright house. Matsutani built on the contouring designed by Wright, using it to great effect in his placement of the gazebo and pool while leaving it an open grass area as Wright had designed it. The gazebo and pool can be viewed from the living and dining rooms or the terrace just outside these interior spaces. The Koi pond and rock garden with its stone and gravel paths help to link the Main House and the Guest House physically and visually.

The garden has received much attention through several newspaper and magazine articles. Although it is still less than fifty years old, it is a fine example of a small, private Japanese garden designed by an important local landscape designer and gardener. Despite its long association with the house, National Register regulations require that it would have to meet the criterion of exceptional significance in order to contribute to the Buehler property. Because of this restriction, the garden will be nominated separately to the California Register of Historical Resources as a designed landscape.

The major garden structures are described here as a part of the Buehler property. None of these structures contribute to the house since they are less than fifty years old. Under "Additional Materials," a site inventory map provides an orientation to these structures and their relationship to the overall garden.

Gazebo

⁶ Boughton, Barbara. "Naturalness and Simplicity key to all Japanese designs," SF Chronicle, March 29, 1995.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

The Gazebo is a rustic wooden structure, hexagonal in shape. It consists of a viewing platform surrounded by a rustic rail. The shingle roof is supported on rustic posts. The structural elements of the roof are exposed. The Gazebo is sited on the south side of the creek over the waterfall pond that was created from a creek diversion. The Gazebo is situated so that several views of the garden are available to the occupant of the shelter. The most immediate view is of the pool to the northeast and the water iris to the northwest. It also provides a south facing vista on the Western Glade and its statuary. It is a principal viewing object from other locations on the rear property including from the living room of the house, the Guest House and the bridge that spans the creek from the east side of the Guest House (Bridge a). The Gazebo was constructed in the 1960s and retains excellent integrity.

Tea House

The sukiya style Tea House is a traditional building with a rustic appearance. It is located in the southeast corner of the garden and is accessible from a gravel path at the top of the glade and from a dry creek log and concrete bridge to the northeast of the glade. The building was designed by Matsutani and built by him and Maynard Buehler. Rectangular in form, it consists of a single screened room which opens via sliding panels onto an elevated platform. The building has a steeply gabled roof with wide sloping eaves. It is clad with vertical board siding on the upper exterior wall and with a traditional bark cloth on the lower wall. The north side of the Tea House platform is enclosed with a rail surmounted by a traditional gabled finish. The building was constructed in 1992 and is was the last major element installed in the garden shortly before both Buehler and Matsutani's deaths. It is unaltered and retains excellent integrity.

There are five bridges scattered throughout the garden. All are integrated with the Japanese Garden design. Some provide not only access, but viewing situations and vistas onto specific landscape elements. They also serve a practical purpose providing linkage from one area of the garden to another over the creek and natural drainages which bisects the site.

Bridge a

Bridge a extends across the creek from the east side of the Guest House and the Western Glade. It traverses a heavily vegetated area with native trees on both sides. It is a long wooden plank bridge with a solid guard rail. From its center it provides an important vista on the Gazebo, rock pond and water iris. It is in moderate condition, but retains its integrity of materials, workmanship, design, setting and location.

Bridge b

This is a three foot wide arched wooden bridge. It has a rail that consists of wooden posts and copper hand rails. It provides access across the creek at the rock pool below the Gazebo and is part of the landscape composition consisting of the pond, waterfall, Gazebo and iris. It is in good condition and retains its integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 10

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Bridge c

This is a long three foot wide bridge which spans the creek in the highly naturalized southwest corner of the garden. It is not easily seen from the more formal garden due to its naturalized setting. The bridge is wooden with guard rails. Katherine Buehler says that this bridge was present on the property when she and Maynard purchased the site. This is the only element of the garden that is probably more than fifty years old. It is in poor condition and has lost one of its side rails. It retains its integrity although it is in need of repair.

Bridge d

This is a very stylized low bridge with a concrete center and log edgés. It crosses a Zen dry creek which was designed in a natural drainage. The creek bed consists of carefully arranged boulders and gravel. The bridge is part of a gravel path leading from the lower edge of the Western Glace to the Tea House. It is in good condition and retains its integrity.

Bridge e

This wooden bridge is twelve feet long and is situated at a slight elevation above a natural drainage. It has no guard rails and is part of a path leading from the upper portion of the Western Glade to the Tea House. It is in good condition and retains integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Significance:

The Buehler House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under all three of the sub-categories of Criterion C. It is an excellent example of its style, type and period. It is one of a number of Usonian style residences designed between 1936 and 1959 by Frank Lloyd Wright. The Buehler House exemplifies all the major characteristics that define the Usonian style. It is a modest house with strongly horizontal lines that is integrated closely with its environment and which is organized to facilitate an informal, family oriented life-style. The Buehler House, constructed in 1948-1949, also is an example of Wright's particular expression of the Modernist movement, a movement that gained wide acceptance in the 1940s and 1950s. The Buehler House exemplifies the innovations in construction and technology that Wright sought to introduce into home design with the object of significantly reducing costs for the average buyer. Among those found in the Buehler House are the use of radiant heating, panel wall construction, use of steel structural materials, and the organization of the building on a geometric grid system. Finally the Buehler House is the work of a recognized master that possesses high artistic value. The Usonian house has been widely recognized as one of Wright's most important design innovations and one of the major achievements of his long career. Each Usonian house was an individual expression of an architectural philosophy regarding how the American family should live and be housed. The Buehler House aptly illustrates Wright's conviction that small, economical houses could be realized through beautiful natural materials, careful spacial organization, and simplicity of design. The Buehler House is eligible at a State level of significance as one of the small number of Usonian houses that Wright designed in California.

Historical Background and Context of the Buehler House

Maynard Buehler is often cited as an archetype of a Wright client. According to Leonard Eaton, John Sergeant and Alan Hess, the typical Wright client was an entrepreneurial, independent-minded business man, who knew he was a pioneer when he built his home.¹ Maynard Buehler was an engineer, a graduate of U.C. Berkeley, and an inventor. He designed and manufactured a mount for gun and rifle scopes that provided the basis of a successful life-long business. The house was designed specifically for the Buehlers and remains in the ownership of Katherine Buehler.

In 1948 Buehler and his wife, Katherine, then in their mid-thirties with a young daughter, approached Wright about building them a house on a lot they had acquired in Orinda, a small, then semi-rural community east of Oakland in Contra Costa County. Buehler wrote to Taliesin East:

We have always tremendously admired your houses and wished that we lived closer, as we couldn't understand how such a project as building a house could be carried on over a great distance. Now, after the January issue of ARCHITECTURAL FORUM (sic) has been worn to a

¹ Freeman, Allen. "Wright Again," *Preservation*, Sept-Oct 1997, 72; Hess, 236; Sergeant, 22.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

frazzle, and we have seen your houses in nearly every state we thought the only way to find out was to write you.²

Twenty days later Wright replied:

We will be glad to go to work for you. Please send us your requirements and survey...³

This began a long and colorful correspondence that extended to April, 1951, in which Wright, the Buelhers, and the Taliesin fellows who supervised the construction of the house exchanged ideas, modified plans and sparred back and forth. The correspondence gives a significant insight into the working relationship between Wright and the clients he worked with on the small Usonian houses. Although not actively present on site, and working from a survey and photographs in placing the house on the land, Wright was nonetheless intimately involved not only in the initial design but in working out myriad tiny details that contributed to both the coherence and aesthetic character of the finished product.

Wright is often characterized as arrogant and dismissive of his clients. The well documented relationship with the Buehlers does not conform to this description. Throughout their relationship Wright was responsive to his clients, including the redesign of the house when the preliminary concept proved too costly for the young couple. However, the lively exchanges between Wright and the Buehler lives up to the reputation that Wright acquired for flamboyance and for providing his clients not only with a beautiful design but also a memorable experience.

In April, 1948, the Buehlers forwarded a site survey for the one acre lot indicating topography, existing plantings and orientation. They apparently also provided Wright with their thoughts on what they would like in a house, which Maynard described as "...a 50 page theses on what we wanted in a house" and a cost limitation of \$25,000.⁴ In February, Maynard, very anxious to begin construction, pressed Wright for the plans, which were then promised to be ready in a "fortnight." Buehler wrote again in June complaining: "A fortnight and a half or more has passed now without them!"⁵ Their frustrations were allayed when the plans finally arrived. Katherine Buehler immediately responded to Wright that "The house plan is absolutely wonderful (sic)" and that she was having the renderings framed. She then proceeded to detail a number of small changes that she would like to have made. Katherine Buehler recalls that at some point during these negotiations she received a phone call in which Wright announced that "Your architect is here," inviting them to meet him for breakfast the next day at 7:30 at the St.

² Maynard Buehler to Frank Lloyd Wright, February 18, 1948. Correspondence (# 4805, B118E03) In the Frank Lloyd Wright Collection, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

³ Wright to Buehler, March 10, 1948. (file # 4805 B1201306).

⁴ Buehler to Wright, February 18, 1948.

⁵ Wright to Buehler, May 15, 1948 (#4805 B122E06); Buehler to Wright, June 11, 1948.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Francis Hotel for breakfast.⁶ This was one of three personal meetings Wright had with the Buehlers during the planning and construction of the house.

In her June response to Wright, Katherine mentioned in passing that the house appeared that it might cost a bit more than their \$25,000 budget. When Maynard had the project informally estimated, the costs came in much closer to \$60,000. This required a substantial rethinking of the project:

Now Mr. Wright, we think your design is beautiful, and only wish we could build it as shown. However, we feel that \$25,000 for a house (exclusive of the shop which shouldn't run over \$4,000), plus \$10,000 for furnishing, and \$5,000.00 for landscaping and misc., is all we can afford.

Therefore, it seems imperative that we keep our house under 2,000 square feet.⁷

During July the plans were reworked and the Buehlers met and began working with Wes Peters from Taliesin. Peters appears to have acted as an initial liaison between Wright and his clients, doing some redesign and making suggestions that were then forwarded to Wright for his approval. The Buehlers had considerable input into what they wanted in the house in the way of details. Katherine in particular corresponded with Wright requesting a pass-through from the kitchen to the dining room, two-way cabinets for the china, and expressed her long-held desires for a pantry and the family's requirements in regard to furniture, particularly the dining table:

We plan to eat breakfast and lunch in the area where you have shown the stationary table...and use the enclosed all glass dining room overlooking the pool for dinner, and all company and holiday meals when we serve 9 people, (sic) Would it be possible to design a sectional dining table that would seat 9 people and could be broken up into smaller units for use as the breakfast table...by breaking them up this way, they would give a double or triple purpose..."⁸

Wright responded with the design of the three-piece triangular dining table that remains in the Buehler's dining room. She also provided data on the appliances they wished to use and details for the fittings and cabinets in Maynard's shop. These also seem to have been incorporated into Wright's revised plans which finally arrived in late August. The Buehlers were pleased with the revised, smaller house and Wright felt that: "Condensation helped instead of hurting the scheme."⁹

Construction commenced in October, 1948, supervised by Walter Olds. Olds was living in the Bay Area and was overseeing the construction of the V.C. Morris gift shop in San Francisco for Wright. Olds'

⁶ Personal communication with Katherine Buehler, April 18, 2006. Mrs. Buehler also recalls that after an enjoyable discussion and lavish breakfast, Wright passed the bill to Maynard.

⁷ Buehler to Wright, July 5, 1948 (#4805 B124C07)

⁸ Katherine Buehler to Wright, August 25, 1948 (#4805 B126B10).

⁹ Wright to Buehler, August 30, 1948 (#4805 B126D02).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

supervision was requested by Buehler, rather than assigned by Wright. This use of an apprentice during the construction phase of a project later became a standard arrangement, but appears to have been less common at the time the Buehlers built their house. Many years later Olds described his relationship with the project saying that his first responsibility was to Wright to carry out the design intent.¹⁰ The correspondence between Olds and Wright reflects how seriously he took this responsibility, referring even the smallest changes for Wright' approval.

The house was completed in April, 1949. Wright's innovation brought both satisfaction and some typical problems. Writing to settle up the costs of the project Maynard told Wright that "*Overlooking the leaks in the roof we can't imagine living anywhere else – we love it [emphasis added].*"¹¹ This is a view that continues to be expressed by Katherine Buehler after 58 years of living in the house.¹²

The Buehler House as an Example of Its Style, Type and Period

The term Usonian which Wright employs in his 1932 *Autobiography* has no clear definition. In his National Register nomination of the Jacobs House, Paul Sprague defined it as "an *artistic* house of low cost for an average citizen of the United States of North America."¹³ Contemptuous of Beaux Arts classicism and the historical revivalism that dominated domestic architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, Wright conceived of the Usonian house as a dwelling whose form and spacial organization would be uniquely American. For Wright the critical problem was to find a style and form of construction that would make artistically interesting designs accessible to ordinary middle-class families. Wright's own credo stated that "...a house is more a home by being a work of art."¹⁴

The Usonian house represented a natural evolution of ideas Wright had been working out since the beginning of his career. These included concerns with how families live in and use domestic space, the break down of the "box" as the unit of interior organization, the organic relationship of the house to its site, the expression of natural materials, structural innovation, and the integration of ornament into the architecture itself. The Great Depression and a resultant lack of commissions forced Wright to turn to more theoretical work. During the period between 1932 and 1936 Wright explored his earlier concerns in more depth and, influenced by the economic conditions of the time, focused more acutely on the issue of cost and accessibility to the middle class. Out of his lectures and essays his mature ideas emerged regarding both the ideal American home and its place in an ideal larger social context he called the Broadacre City.

¹⁰ Freeman, p.72.

¹¹ Buehler to Wright, April 19,1949 (#4805 B149C01)

¹² Personal communication with Katherine Buehler, April 12, 2006.

¹³ Sprague, Paul. *National Register Nomination Jacobs House , Madison Wisconsin.* July 31, 2003.

¹⁴ Wright, Frank Lloyd, *The Natural House.* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Wright's Usonian designs fundamentally reorganized domestic space. In the Prairie Houses Wright had first explored this reorganization using an open plan to promote human interaction and to break down the specialized function of individual rooms. As Robert Twombly describes it the multipurpose space within the Prairie House "...minimized the singularity of an event's location but increased the importance of the time it was performed."¹⁵ The Usonian house sought to create an even more interactive family space. The living room, always the largest space in the Usonian, became a space for "...eating, relaxation, cooking, play, entertainment, cultural enrichment, and with the patio appended, for virtually all other family functions."¹⁶ By moving the kitchen, renamed by Wright the "workspace" from the back to the center of the house Wright enabled the wife/mother to continue to interact with her family or with guests while preparing meals. The success of Wright's approach to integrated space was attested by Herbert Jacobs, the journalist for whom Wright built the first Usonian design. Jacobs observed that "...it does something to you subconsciously. I think it did something to my children. Living in that house was fantastically wonderful."¹⁷

The Usonian house had many plan variations, but whether L-shape, round, hexagonal, or a hemicycle, all the Usonians were "zoned" with a tightly organized core containing the kitchen, bath, and utilities at the center of the plan, a gathering area characterized by the large living room which usually incorporated the dining functions, and a private zone of bedrooms, sometimes including an office or study. These were distinct and separated public and private areas of the house. In all of the plans, the emphasis is clearly on the gathering space which is invariably large, well-lit, with varied height ceilings, and open, often dramatic, vistas on the outdoors.¹⁸ The workspace (kitchen) is small and compact, not unlike a ship's galley, and the bedrooms are generally small, in the case of children's rooms, sometimes almost cabin-like with built-in bunk beds, closets and desks.

The Usonian was both cause and effect of an emerging informal life-style in which the cocktail party or the buffet were becoming more popular than the formal dinner party. John Sergeant argues that Wright's clients were somewhat ahead of their time in adopting a new social informality, while Brooks Pfeiffer and David Gebhard point out that Wright's reorganization of household space in the Usonian had a profound influence on contemporaneous post-WWII housing, especially in the open space plan of the ubiquitous ranch house.¹⁹

While Wright opened the interior space into a seamless flow, he sought to isolate the private family dwelling from the street and the uninvited guest. In the earlier Prairie houses the entry was often

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid. 260

¹⁸ Hess, Alan and Alan Weintraub, *Frank Lloyd Wright: the Houses*. (New York: Rizzoli Publications) 230.

¹⁹ Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and The American House," in Hess, 49; Gebhard, David, *Romanza: The California Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1979), 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

obscured from immediate view, or indirectly accessed. With the Usonian house, the front elevation becomes a blank wall devoid of fenestration other than a clerestory, which is often screened with wood cut panels or patterned concrete block. The carport, a Wright innovation, is an integral part of the plan, sometimes intervening between the street and the house, as is the case in the Buehler house. Wright, with many of his contemporaries, viewed the automobile as a liberating invention, freeing people from the need to live in compact and crowded urban environments. In a decentralized, essentially suburban world, the carport was the point of arrival and departure from the house, enabling the family to live in and avail itself of the benefits of a more bucolic environment, something that Wright himself strongly preferred.

In turning its back to the street, the Usonian house opened out to the backyard. Siting of the Usonian houses was an important factor for Wright. Although the houses were to be low cost and often small, he specified that his clients must have a large building site.²⁰ He was not interested in designing for urban lots. In most of these houses the principal façade is at the rear, opening onto the landscape, and in the case of many of the California examples, onto the swimming pool. Large expanses of glass “walls” open the living/dining room to sweeping vistas, while bedrooms also look out onto the exterior space. The integration of interior and exterior was enhanced by the seamless expansion of the cement floor from the house to the terrace or outside walkways, the extension of the interior soffits above windows to become exterior overhangs, and the elimination of walls or structural elements at corners through the use of mitred glass. The effect of these devices is to unify the house and its surrounding landscape. Towers in the small “workspaces” and clerestories also open the interior to the outdoors. Sergeant notes that the clerestories allow glimpses of sky and trees and that the “interior is also animated by raking sunbeams that can be especially beautiful at the end of the day.”²¹

Wright relied on the extensive use of wood and its natural beauty to provide the decorative element of the Usonian houses. He made extensive use of cedar, pine and redwood in the interiors for closets, cabinets, and bookshelves. Even in the concrete block houses, the built in cabinetry creates the impression of a predominance of warm wooden surfaces. Cut wood screens in windows replaced the designed glass work of his earlier houses, but provided much the same effect in filtering light and creating visual interest. Wright strongly believed that decoration was not an addition to be made after the fact, but was integral to the architecture of the building. Usonian houses were frequently furnished with built-in benches and couches, modular dining tables that could be assembled or disassembled for different purposes and different size dining parties, end tables and lighting. In the Usonian designs Wright achieved his ideal of “organic simplicity seen as the countenance of perfect integration...” in which all superficial decoration was rejected, lighting and heating were made an architectural feature of the house, and all furniture, textiles and hangings were the products of the architect.²²

²⁰ *General Conditions and Specifications for the Walton House* in the private collection of Dr. Robert and Mary Walton.

²¹ Sergeant, John, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses*, (New York: Whitney Design, 1975), 186.

²² Wright, Frank Lloyd, *Autobiography*, (London: Farber and Farber Limited, 1932), 135.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

The Buehler House combines Wright's L-plan organization, first utilized in the Jacobs House, with his interest in the hexagon as a means of breaking down the traditional interior box. In the plan Wright zones the living areas of the house by function and reorganizes the Buehler's domestic space into a more informal pattern. Like all Usonian houses, the Buehler House has a very tightly organized kitchen, "workspace." The Buehler House is unusual in having a separate dining area that is segregated from the living room by the large double face fireplace. However, the pass-through from the kitchen to the dining room breaks down the formality of the space and integrates the food preparation and dining, allowing both site lines and communication between the two areas. In keeping with Wright's ideas regarding multi-functional space a small built-in table extends from the workspace into the living room providing an informal alternative to the defined dining space.

The hexagonal living room is intended both as a family gathering place and for entertaining. Typical of Wright designs, the entry from the exterior is low and dark, creating a dramatic opening into the large hexagonal space with its sweeping slanted ceiling. The spaciousness of the living area is reinforced by the arrangement of the seating with built-in banquettes that follow the curve of the walls. Inserted between the wall and the banquettes are built-in planter boxes, whose plantings mirror the greenery just outside.

The narrow hallway directly to the left of the entry door leads to the bedroom and bathrooms which are arranged along the long arm of the L-plan. In the Buehler's case this private zone also included a study/guest room. As in most of the Usonian houses this area is relatively plain, and does not have built-in beds.

It was Wright's belief that ornament and architecture were part of a single whole. Hence, furnishings and decoration could not be left to the whim of a decorator or the occupant of the house. The furnishings in the living room of the Buehler House, including the planters, the shelves and cabinets were all designed by Wright. The built-in and free-standing Wright tables contribute measurably to the overall interior aesthetic of the Buehler House.

Typical Usonian house features include multi-level roofs with wide fascia, roof levels carried into the interior to vary ceiling height and spatial perception, cut-out wooden screens, clerestories to provide light and privacy, concrete Cherokee Red floors, and a radiant heating system. Cinder block, one of Wright's most characteristic materials is used to build up the lower walls of the hexagon, in the shop building walls, the carport, and on the interior in the massive fireplace that divides the living and dining spaces. The wooden walls are all built to conform to Wright's lap siding system with boards on both sides secured to plywood panels with screws. The carport, a quintessential part of the Usonian house is conveniently located at the entry from the road.

The shop is a unique aspect of the Buehler house. As an engineer and inventor, Maynard Buehler required a specialized workspace in which he could experiment with ideas and forge tools to meet his needs. The shop that Wright designed is fitted with cabinets and drawers custom designed to Buehler's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

specifications. It has a comfortable workspace, a fireplace and bathroom, allowing Buehler to spend hours without having to go back and forth to the house. Although Wright designed workspaces and shops for some of his other residential clients, the mechanical work space that he designed for Mr. Buehler is the only one of its kind.

The Buehler House as an Example of Wright's Construction Methods

The materials and construction details of the Buehler House are exemplary of the building systems that Wright employed to achieve cost efficiency, visual character and interest in his small houses. In his attempt to create a house that could be individual and artistic while at the same time low in cost, Wright introduced a number of novel construction techniques that strongly affect the appearance and feeling of the buildings. All Wright's houses were built on a geometric grid, a modular system that determined the placement of walls and dimensions of materials, cutting waste and hence cost.²³ These modules varied in size and shape depending on the scale of the house.²⁴ While this grid system was first developed in the Prairie Houses, Wright took its development much further in the Usonian designs with the grid clearly laid out on the plans and inscribed or stamped into the concrete floor. The use of steel beams and cantilevers allowed Wright to eliminate structural walls and columns. Small homes, some such as the Jacobs House and the Pope-Leighey House were only about 1500 square feet, but could be made to feel much larger than they actually were by eliminating the traditional four cornered box as the basis of the room. Wright eliminated the need for plastering and interior finishes by using board and batten, or lap siding wall systems on both the exterior and interior.²⁵ In many of the later Usonian houses he relied on concrete block as a primary construction material.

Wright also introduced into the Usonian houses a unique radiant heating system in the floor. An idea he derived from his experience in Japan, the system of heating pipes was laid on a drained gravel bed and then covered with a thin concrete "floormat" which provided a uniform level of heat throughout the house. It eliminated the expense of concealing radiators with millwork and also allowed the occupant to cut heating expenses since the house could be kept comfortable at lower temperatures than with other types of systems. Although not every Usonian had radiant heat, a large enough number utilized this system for Wright scholars to consider it a general characteristic of the house type.

The Buehler House employed most of the innovations that Wright devised for the Usonian houses. The house is set on a shallow foundation with a gravel mat for the radiant heat system. The organizing grid is stamped into the concrete floor plates which extend outside the rear doors integrating the interior and exterior. The house makes use of the lapped panel siding with the same finishes on both the inside and

²³ Sergeant, 19.

²⁴ Hess, 231.

²⁵ Sergeant describes this system as consisting of a plywood core which was covered on each side by a dampproof membrane with the board screwed to it on both sides. This construction provided strength and gave insulation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

outside. It also makes extensive use of concrete block construction. Steel framing makes possible the dramatic sweep of the living room windows, devoid of intrusive corner bracing.

As with many Wright projects, the innovation in building and technology led to problems with local building officials. In November, 1948, Wright had to convince the Contra Costa County Building Superintendent that the board and batten wall construction was sound and stable. In satisfying the man's concerns Wright cited the success of other Usonian houses including the Pope-Leighy House and the Bazett House in Burlingame. Defending his methods Wright wrote:

The walls (very strong in themselves) are reinforced with metal inserts at the corners and form a net-work capable of resisting infinitely more than they will ever be subjected to.²⁶

Although Wright's innovations in construction techniques were never widely adopted by other architects and builders, they were used in all the houses he designed in the latter part of his career. His unique construction systems were integral to the aesthetic of his houses and played a major role in his immediately recognizable designs.

The Buehler House as the Work of a Master

Wright's stature as a master of his craft is well recognized and has been examined by numerous scholars in literally hundreds of works. He is the best known American architect of the 20th century. Many of his works are icons, including the Marin County Civic Center, the Guggenheim Museum, the Johnson Wax Buildings, and Fallingwater to list only a few.

In addition to his monumental work, Wright created highly distinctive bodies of residential work that are united by artistic and technical innovation and by Wright's life-long interest in the interplay of domestic space and family life, a subject about which he wrote and lectured extensively. Wright continued to design and execute houses, both large and small, from the beginning of his career in 1887 until his death in 1959. Of 430 Wright designs that were constructed, 260 were homes.²⁷ Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, the noted Wright scholar, has catalogued over 600 residential designs that Wright produced over his career.²⁸ As Alan Hess describes it, "Wright found his art in the intersections of American life, in the boundary between society at large and private life, in the suburbs between city and country."²⁹

Wright's domestic architecture falls within three main periods of extraordinary innovation: the Prairie Houses (1893-1910), the Textile Block Houses (1917-1924) and the Usonian houses (1936-1959). The

²⁶ Wright to Superintendent of Building Construction, November 22, 1949 (#4805 B128D09)

²⁷ Hess, 13.

²⁸ Pfeiffer, 44.

²⁹ Hess, 13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Usonian houses express an important phase in Wright's career. They are the culmination of his continual experimentation with the form and content of residential architecture. While aesthetically masterful, Wright's houses were driven by large controlling ideas regarding the relationship between architecture, the way people lived, and inter-familial relationships. The Usonian houses were his last major attempt to give voice to his mature ideas on these subjects.

Each of the Usonian houses that Wright designed in California was a response to his search for a house that would function best for the unique American family. At the same time each house considered the needs, family situation, and desires of the individual client as the interaction between the Buehlers and Wright illustrates. Each house was carefully designed to its site to take advantage of the topography, maximize privacy, and ground the house in its natural environment. Each of the houses, including the Buehler House, is the work of a master that embodies his basic approach to residential design. Wright biographer, Robert Twombly, expresses this very succinctly: "The general run of Wright's late residential work was...built from a formula, which is not to say that it was undesirable, for the formula was proven and humane."³⁰ John Sergeant, who was the first to study this phase of Wright's career in detail, concluded that "The interpretation of the need for a small, informal house was the greatest achievement of Wright's late architectural career."³¹

Wright designed and constructed twenty-four buildings in California in the course of his career. Five of these were civic or commercial buildings, including the monumental Marin County Civic Center, five were the experimental textile block houses of the 1920s, one was an early Prairie Style in Montecito (the George Stewart House, 1909). The largest single body of his California work is expressed in the Usonian house. Beginning in 1936 and extending until his death in 1959 he executed twelve Usonian houses in the state.³² The predominance of Usonian houses in Wright's California work is in part a reflection of the general increase in Wright's commissions that followed World War II. As Alan Hess observed:

"Wright was sixty-eight years old –Sullivan's age when he died –the year that Fallingwater was built (1935) in the forested western Pennsylvania countryside. By whatever random coincidence, or unfathomable equilibrium of history, Wright's sixty-eighth year opened a chapter that was to make him the most celebrated architect of the century."³³

The year after the completion of Fallingwater, Wright built the Hanna House, also known as the Honeycomb House, for Paul Hanna, a professor at Stanford University. His first California house since the 1920s, the Hanna House was built on a hexagonal grid that determined the placement and angles of the walls and rooms. One of the largest of the Usonian houses, at 4,285 square feet, it was widely publicized in architectural publications with a complete issue of *House Beautiful* (January 1963)

³⁰ Robert Twombly. *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Work*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1979), 343.

³¹ Sergeant, 14.

³² One additional house, a Prairie Style studio constructed for Aline Barnsdall, was demolished in the 1950s.

³³ Hess, 377.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

eventually devoted to it. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a National Historic Landmark. Two years later Wright designed a house for Sydney Bazlett, the Vice-President of the Bank of America in San Francisco. Located in Hillsborough, it is a smaller version of the hexagonal house. The Sturges house in Los Angeles with its dramatic cantilever over a hillside was completed the same year. The Obler Gatehouse in Malibu was built on a Usonian plan in 1940. This house was originally intended as part of a much larger estate, called Eaglefeather, for the radio and movie writer-producer, Arch Obler. However, for personal reasons Obler abandoned the larger project and continued to live in the Gatehouse. In 1948 Wright embarked on two California Usonian projects, one for Della Walker on a dramatic site on the beach in Carmel, and one for, Maynard Buehler and his wife Katherine.

The Buehler House is among the earliest of Wright's California Usonians and represents a complete expression of his Usonian ideal. Despite the fire of 1994, it retains its integrity.

The /Guest House, Playhouse and Swimming Pool as Contributing Elements of the Property

The two small buildings designed by Walter Olds contribute to the significance of the property. Although not designed by Wright, they were added to the property shortly after Olds supervised the completion of the house as a Taliesin apprentice. Olds intended the buildings to compliment Wright's work. They were designed in a compatible modern style, using the same materials and construction systems that Wright had used for the house. In physically separating the buildings from the house, Olds met his client's need for more space without intruding on Wright's design. In their fifty-eight years of stewardship of the Wright house they commissioned, these are the only changes that the Buehler's intentionally made. Wright maintained that the Usonian houses were intended to change with the needs of their owners. The small buildings designed by Olds were integral to the Buehler's life in the house and their use of the property. They represent a graceful and sensitive solution to the family's desire for additional space while preserving the complete integrity of Wright's work.

The Swimming Pool

The swimming pool is significant as a part of Wright's original design. It should be noted that the pool shown on the ground plan was modified at the time of original construction, but this was done with Wright's approval. The pool has undergone change through its conversion in use to a Koi pond that is incorporated into the Japanese Garden. Visually, the pool now relates directly to the gravel zen garden at its southeast end and more generally to the overall garden. Because of the extensive amount of plant material that has been placed in the pool, it reads as a landscape rather than a pool structure.

While its integrity as a swimming pool is impaired by the conversion, the pool as it was designed and modified by Wright is still intact. Neither the shape, size, or design of the pool has been structurally altered. The boulders and plantings are removable. For this reason the pool continues to contribute to the property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Other Buildings and Structures

The glass house, two storage sheds, auxiliary carport, tea house, gazebo, and the five garden bridge structures are non-contributing. None of these buildings and structures were a part of the original plan for the house, nor were they built specifically to relate to the house. They were added to the property over time and none, except bridge c, are fifty years old or older. The garden structures, bridges and the tea house may be significant as contributing elements within a California Register of Historical Resources garden context. Such a context has not yet been developed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dunham, Judith. *Details of Frank Lloyd Wright: The California Work, 1909-1974*. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994).

Gebhard, David. *Romanza: The California Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1979).

Heinz, Thomas. *Frank Lloyd Wright Field Guide*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005).

Hess, Alan and Alan Weintraub. *Frank Lloyd Wright: the Houses*. (New York: Rizzoli Publications, 2005).

Leger, Dixie and Scot Zimmerman. *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Western Work*. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999).

Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks and Yukio Futagawa. *Frank Lloyd Wright: Usonian Houses*. (Tokyo: A.D.A EDITA, 2002).

Sprague, Paul. *National Register Nomination Jacobs House , Madison Wisconsin*. July 31, 2003, unpublished.

Sergeant, John, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses*, (New York: Whitney Design, 1975).

Twombly, Robert. *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Work*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1979).

Wright, Frank Lloyd. *Autobiography*. (London: Farber and Farber Limited, 1932).

_____. *The Natural House*. (New York: Horizon Press, 1954).

_____. *Organic Architecture*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970).

In addition to these published and unpublished sources architectural plans, correspondence and miscellaneous materials belonging to Dr. Robert and Mary Walton were made available for this project. In addition, Frank Lloyd Wright correspondence in the Frank Lloyd Wright Collection of the Getty Research Institute supplemented the Walton's letters.

Mary Walton generously contributed her time to answer questions and to provide information.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

The extensive correspondence between Wright and Maynard and Katherine Buehler is located in the Frank Lloyd Wright Collection of the Getty Research Institute and all of the letters cited here are from that collection.

Joe Monroe, photographer, discussed the house and his relationship with the Buehlers.

Walter Olds reviewed the original and rehabilitation plans with the author and provided valuable information.

Richard Matsutani, the son of landscape designer, Henry Matsutani provided an interview and articles pertaining to his father.

Katherine Buehler generously shared her recollections and answered questions.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA: BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the property are those of the legal parcel which includes three acres within the City of Orinda, Contra Costa County, California. The Assessor Parcel Number is 269-072-201.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 3

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries encompass the entire legal parcel. As a suburban property, located amidst a number of other residential properties, the assessor parcel is the most logical unit to define the boundaries of the house. In addition the boundaries encompass a coherent visual unit that is bounded on the north by a steep slope to the creek, and on the west, south and east by the enclosed, fenced area along the property lines.

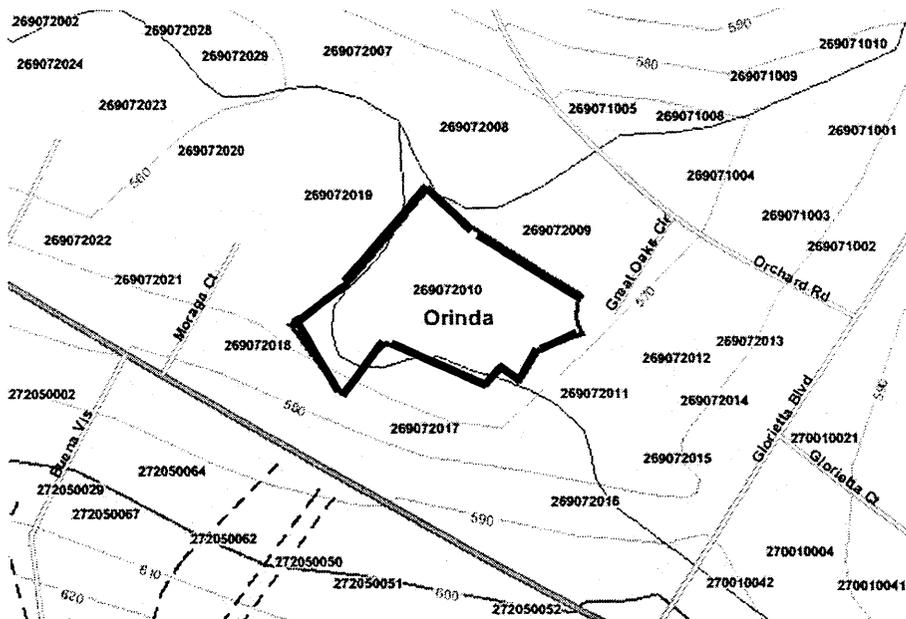
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 4

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

BOUNDARY MAP:



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Additional Items

Page _1_

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

Addition 1 Items: Architectural Drawings

3 Sheets

Floor Plan

Elevations

Elevation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 1

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

HISTORIC VIEWS OF HOUSE:



Figure 1. Rear Elevation circa 1951, view north. Photographer: Maynard Buehler.

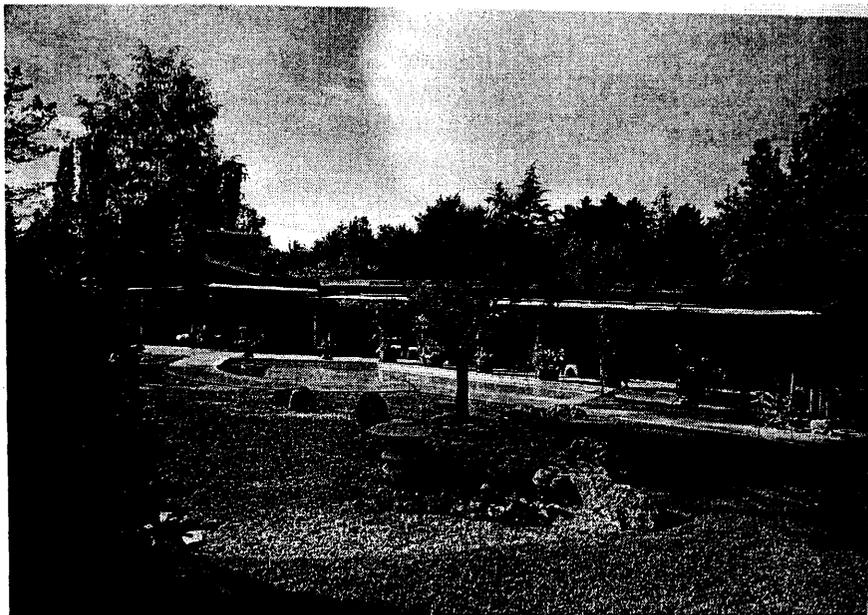


Figure 2. Rear Elevation circa 1983, view northwest. From Gebhard and Zimmerman, *Romanza*. Photographer Scott Zimmerman.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Additional Items

Page 2

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California



Figure 3. Rear Elevation, circa 1983. Courtesy of Scott Zimmerman.



Figure 4. Interior, living room , view southwest, circa 1983. Courtesy of Scott Zimmerman.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 3

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

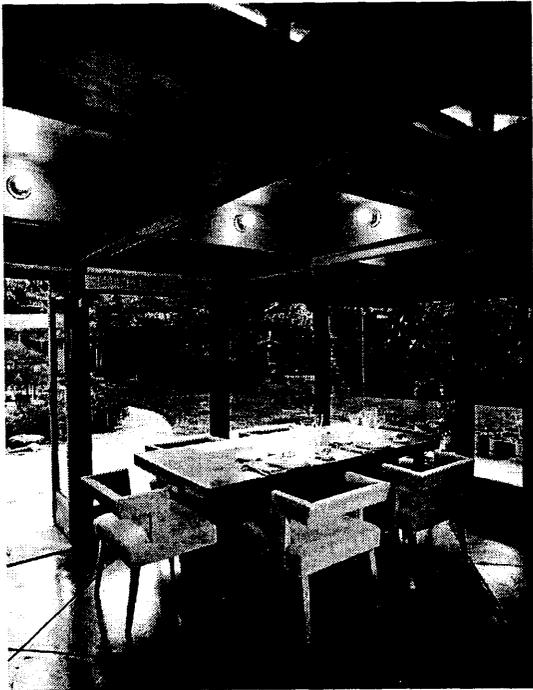


Figure 5. Dining room, view southwest.
Table is designed by Wright. Courtesy of
Scott Zimmerman, 1983.



Figure 6. Kitchen and auxiliary built-in dining table.
View northeast toward the "workspace."
Courtesy of Scott Zimmerman, 1983.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 4

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

GUEST HOUSE AND PLAYHOUSE:



Figure 7. The Guest House, view southwest, looking across the Koi pond (swimming pool) from the bedroom wing of the house.



Figure 8. The Guest House, rear elevation, view northwest. The slope to the left of the building is the area graded at Wright's direction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 5

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

GARDEN DOCUMENTATION:



Figure 9. Front Garden and path above creek. View west.



Figure 10. Rock Garden rear of house. View northeast toward shop.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Items

Page 6

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California



Figure 11. Koi pond, formerly swimming pool. View southwest.



Figure 12. Gazebo, pond and bridge b. View west from the bridge a behind Guest House.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Additional Items

Page 7

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

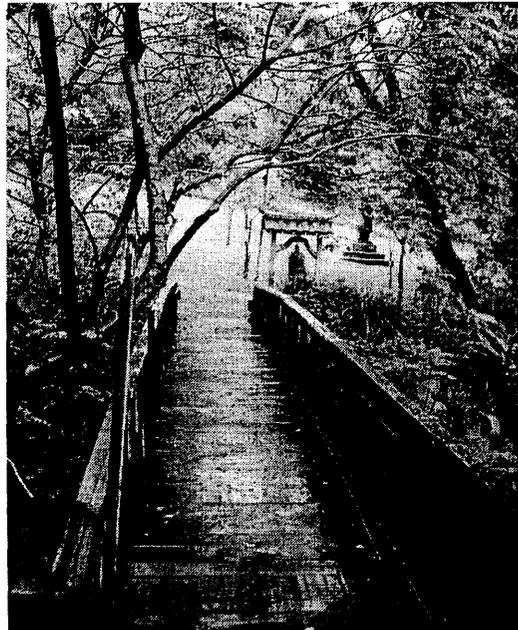


Figure 13. Bridge a from the rear of the Guest House to the Western Glade. View southwest.



Figure 14. The Western Glade. View southeast.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Additional Items

Page 8

Buehler, Maynard and Katherine, House
Contra Costa County, California

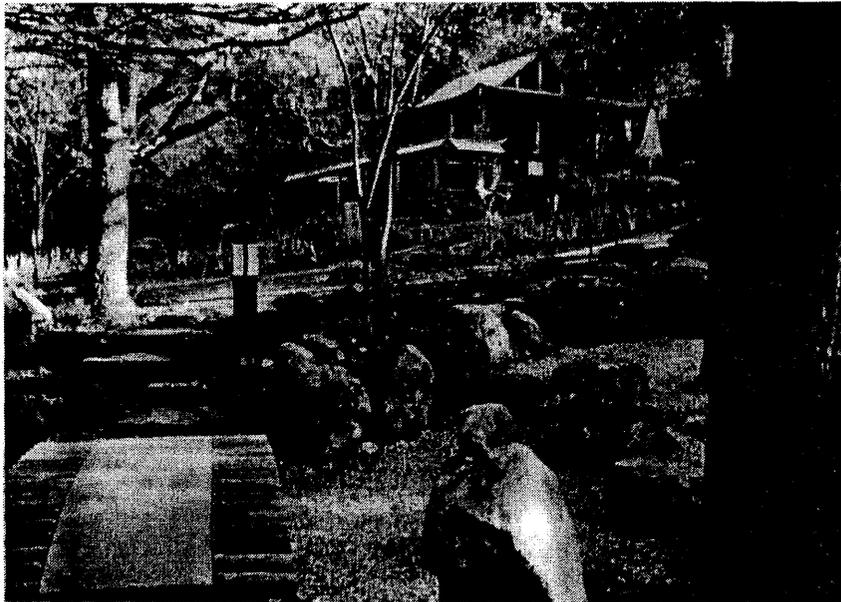
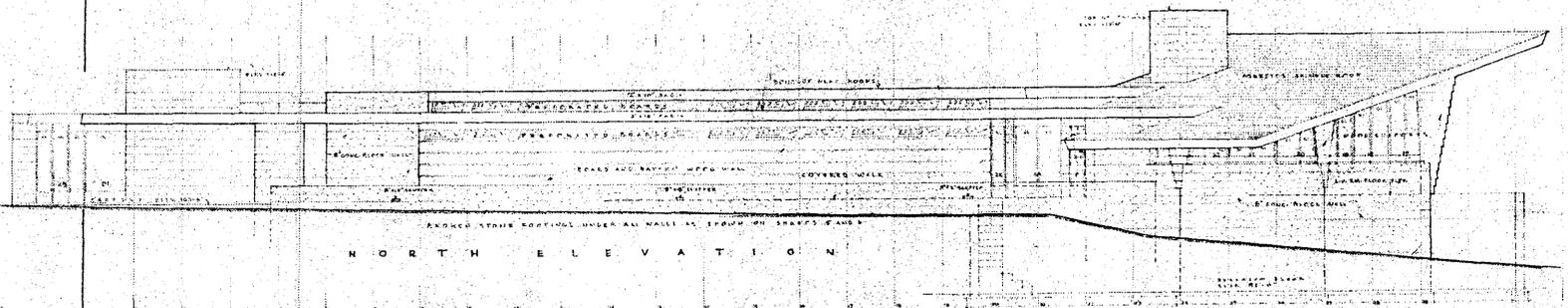
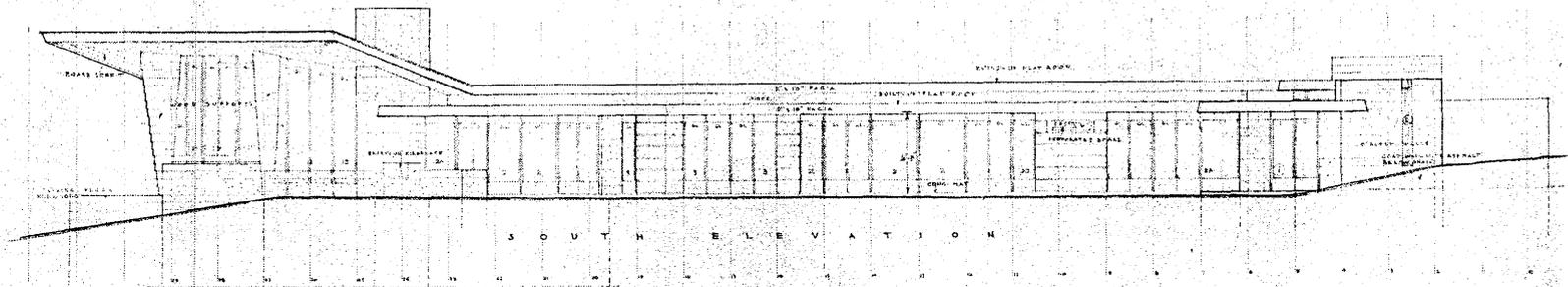


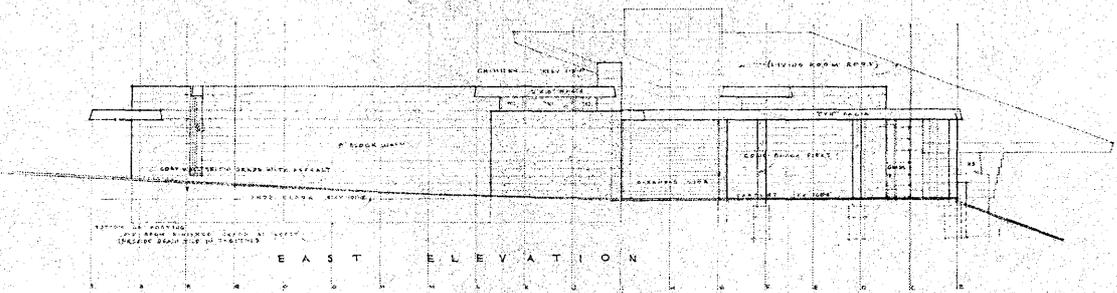
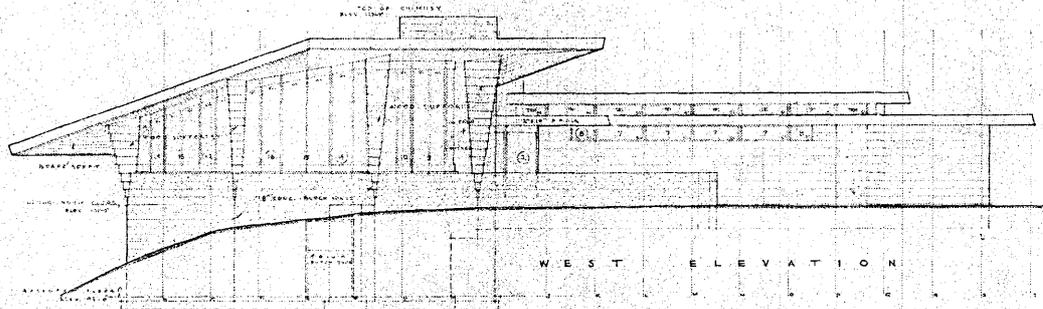
Figure 16. The tea house with the concrete and log bridge d in the foreground. View southeast.



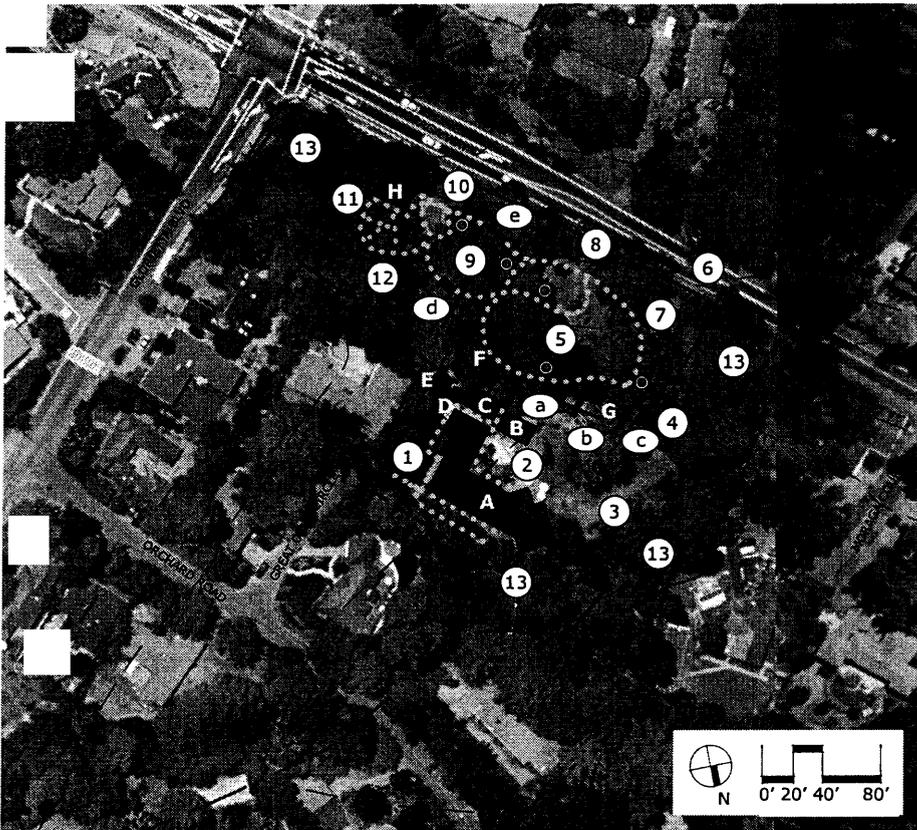
1" X 4" PERFORATED BOARD SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0" SCALE GRAPHIC FOR DIMENSIONS OF OPENING.
SEE SHEET 4 FOR DETAIL SECTION - HANG TWENTY-FIVE STUDS - DIMENSIONS GIVEN ONLY WHERE INDICATED ON PLAN

SHEET NO. 3, ELEVATIONS, SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"
 HOUSE FOR MR. & MRS. MAYNARD P. BUEHLER, OAKLAND, CALIF.
 FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, ARCHITECT





SHEET NO. 4, ELEVATIONS, SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"
 HOUSE FOR MR. & MRS. MAYNARD P. BUEHLER, OAKLAND, CALIF.
 FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, ARCHITECT
 REVISED, NOV. 11, 1940



Legend:

- Property line
- - - 10' contour
- Pedestrian path
- Creek
- E** Structure
- Pedestrian bridge
- Primary sculptures

Structure Key:

- A** Main House
- B** Guest/Garden House
- C** Utility Building
- D** Glass House
- E** Shed 1
- F** Shed 2
- G** Gazebo
- H** Tea House

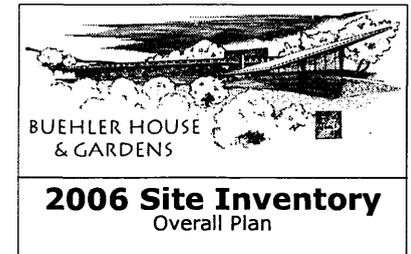
Bridge Key:

- (a)** 5-foot wide wooden plank bridge with solid wooden guardrail
- (b)** 3-foot wide arched wooden bridge with wooden posts and copper hand rails
- (c)** Long 3-foot wide wooden bridge with longitudinal 2x4 planks, crossbraced timber guardrail
- (d)** 10-foot long x 5-foot wide arched bridge, no guardrail, 2-foot concrete strip in center with logs at both sides
- (e)** 2-foot wide plank bridge ~12-foot long, no guardrail

Key Notes Legend:

- (1)** Driveway: see plan enlargement for description
- (2)** Courtyard: see plan enlargement for description
- (3)** Northern Glade: see plan enlargement for description
- (4)** Gazebo area: ~13-foot diameter, 6-sided wood construction; mature *Aesculus californica* on north-western side of gazebo; a Japanese granite lantern sculpture marks the entry to the gazebo on the southern side; brown-colored stepping field stones cross a pool into the gazebo; this pool starts at the level of the gazebo and cascades down a ~8-foot high brown fieldstone waterfall ending in a brown fieldstone lined ~12-foot diameter shallow pond; this pond can be reached by Bridge 'b' from the Glade
- (5)** Western Glade: a 3-foot wide curvilinear gray granite aggregate pathway with wooden edges encircles the lawn glade; mature *Quercus lobata* edge the glade on the northern, eastern and western sides; at the southern end a mix of evergreens that include *Sequoia sempervirens* form a boundary between the property and Moraga Way; small *Prunus* sp. trees and *Acer palmatum* are planted in the lawn area; an ~8-foot tall "General Wang Yi" sculpture is at the northern end close to Bridge 'a'; an ~8-foot tall "Chin Shi Huang - First Emperor of China" statue is at the southern end of the glade
- (6)** Waterfall at Moraga Way: ~16-foot drop brown fieldstone lined waterfall begins at the southern property line and is in alignment with the creek
- (7)** Between the pedestrian pathway and creek, groundcovers of ivy and *Allium* sp. are planted; near Bridge 'c' a ~4-foot tall, granite *Budha* sculpture is located
- (8)** Perimeter Fence: Parallel to Moraga Way is a ~6-foot tall wooden board fence; the fence panels are constructed of ~6-inch wide horizontally laid wood boards; *Sequoia sempervirens*, *Pinus* sp. and tall understory shrubs are planted at this boundary forming a screen between the garden and the adjacent road

- (9)** Dry Creek Bed: Brown fieldstone boulders and gray granite aggregate form a dry creek bed that extends from Bridge 'e' to 'd'; mature *Quercus lobata* and small flowering trees are planted in this area; the 3-foot wide gray granite aggregate pathways that encircle the Southern Glade continue through this area and onto the Tea House; a 4-foot tall female figure white marble sculpture is near Bridge 'e'
- (10)** Tea House: moss covered pathways circle the structure on the northern, eastern and western sides; a ~3-foot tall brown fieldstone retaining wall capped with a ~4-foot Japanese peaked roof wood fence is located at the northern side, this fence and wall wrap around halfway on the western side; also on the western side is a ~13-foot square paved area with gray aggregate and brown fieldstone stepping stones, three-dimensional stones step up to the Tea House platform; a small Japanese water feature is located in the entry area
- (11)** Garden on Northern Side of Tea House: 3-foot wide moss covered gray granite aggregate paths meander through this garden area; Mature *Quercus lobata* and small flowering trees are planted among a perennial garden of *Liriope* sp., *Allium* sp., and *Irises*
- (12)** Creek: a healthy meandering creek runs throughout the site; in most locations the creek is steeply banked; the plantings consist of *Quercus lobata*, *Aesculus californica* and a heavy understory of shrubs
- (13)** Garden boundary plantings: Primarily *Quercus lobata* and *Aesculus californica*; but also including: *Quercus agrifolia*, *Cedrus* sp., *Pinus* sp. overgrown ivy and *vinca* ground-cover



Prepared by PGAdesign^{INC}
Landscape Architects, Oakland, CA

Source of Aerial Photo: 2004 GlobeXplorer.
Source of contour, creek and property lines: Contra Costa County Mapping Information Center, 2006.



Source of Aerial Photo: 2004 GlobeExplorer.
 Source of contour, creek and property lines: Contra Costa
 County Mapping Information Center, 2006.

Legend:

- · · · — Property line
- — — 10' contour
- · · · · Pedestrian path
- · — Creek
- E** Structure
- ▬ Pedestrian bridge
- ⊙ Primary sculptures

Structure Key:

- A** Main House
- B** Guest/Garden House
- C** Utility Building
- D** Glass House
- E** Shed 1
- F** Shed 2
- G** Gazebo
- H** Tea House

Bridge Key:

- (a) 5-foot wide wooden plank bridge with solid wooden guardrail
- (b) 3-foot wide arched wooden bridge with wooden posts and copper hand rails
- (c) Long 3-foot wide wooden bridge with longitudinal 2x4 planks, crossbraced timber guardrail
- (d) 10-foot long x 5-foot wide arched bridge, no guardrail, 2-foot concrete strip in center with logs at both sides
- (e) 2-foot wide plank bridge ~12-foot long, no guardrail

BUEHLER HOUSE
& GARDENS

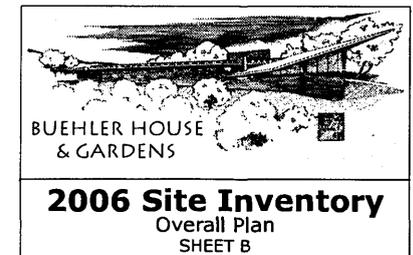
2006 Site Inventory
 Overall Plan
 SHEET A

Prepared by PGAdesign^{INC}
 Landscape Architects, Oakland, CA

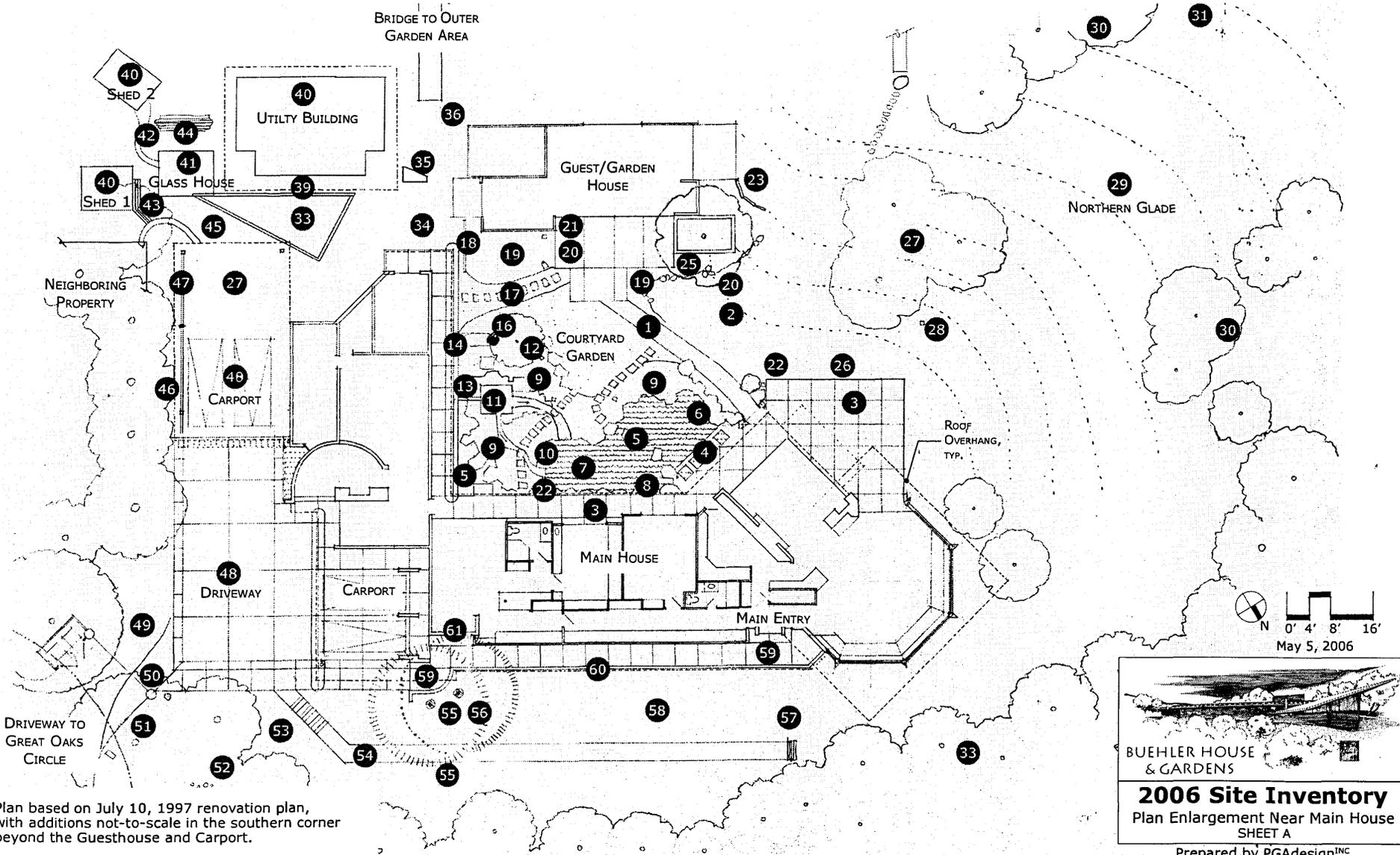
Key Notes Legend:

①	Driveway: see plan enlargement for description
②	Courtyard: see plan enlargement for description
③	Northern Glade: see plan enlargement for description
④	Gazebo area: ~13-foot diameter, 6-sided wood construction; mature <i>Aesculus californica</i> on north-western side of gazebo; a Japanese granite lantern sculpture marks the entry to the gazebo on the southern side; brown-colored stepping field stones cross a pool into the gazebo; this pool starts at the level of the gazebo and cascades down a ~8-foot high brown fieldstone waterfall ending in a brown fieldstone lined ~12-foot diameter shallow pond; this pond can be reached by Bridge 'b' from the Glade
⑤	Western Glade: a 3-foot wide curvilinear gray granite aggregate pathway with wooden edges encircles the lawn glade; mature <i>Quercus lobata</i> edge the glade on the northern, eastern and western sides; at the southern end a mix of evergreens that include <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> form a boundary between the property and Moraga Way; small- <i>Prunus</i> sp. trees and <i>Acer palmatum</i> are planted in the lawn area; an ~8-foot tall "General Wang Yi" sculpture is at the northern end close to Bridge 'a'; an ~8-foot tall "Chin Shi Huang - First Emperor of China" statue is at the southern end of the glade
⑥	Waterfall at Moraga Way: ~16-foot drop brown fieldstone lined waterfall begins at the southern property line and is in alignment with the creek
⑦	Between the pedestrian pathway and creek, groundcovers of ivy and <i>Allium</i> sp. are planted; near Bridge 'c' a ~4-foot tall, granite Buddha sculpture is located
⑧	Perimeter Fence: Parallel to Moraga Way is a ~6-foot tall wooden board fence; the fence panels are constructed of ~6-inch wide horizontally laid wood boards; <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> , <i>Pinus</i> sp. and tall understory shrubs are planted at this boundary forming a screen between the garden and the adjacent road
⑨	Dry Creek Bed: Brown fieldstone boulders and gray granite aggregate form a dry creek bed that extends from Bridge 'e' to 'd'; mature <i>Quercus lobata</i> and small flowering trees are planted in this area; the 3-foot wide gray granite aggregate pathways that encircle the Southern Glade continue through this area and onto the Tea House; a 4-foot tall female figure white marble sculpture is near Bridge 'e'

⑩	Tea House: moss covered pathways circle the structure on the northern, eastern and western sides; a ~3-foot tall brown field stone retaining wall capped with a ~4-foot Japanese peaked roof wood fence is located at the northern side, this fence and wall wrap around halfway on the western side; also on the western side is a ~13-foot square paved area with gray aggregate and brown fieldstone stepping stones, three-dimensional stones step up to the Tea House platform; a small Japanese water feature is located in the entry area
⑪	Garden on Northern Side of Tea House: 3-foot wide moss covered gray granite aggregate paths meander through this garden area; Mature <i>Quercus lobata</i> and small flowering trees are planted among a perennial garden of <i>Liriope</i> sp., <i>Allium</i> sp., and <i>Irises</i>
⑫	Creek: a healthy meandering creek runs throughout the site; in most locations the creek is steeply banked; the plantings consist of <i>Quercus lobata</i> , <i>Aesculus californica</i> and a heavy understory of shrubs
⑬	Garden boundary plantings: Primarily <i>Quercus lobata</i> and <i>Aesculus californica</i> ; but also including: <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> , <i>Cedrus</i> sp., <i>Pinus</i> sp. overgrown ivy and vinca groundcover



Prepared by PGAdesign^{INC}
Landscape Architects, Oakland, CA



Plan based on July 10, 1997 renovation plan, with additions not-to-scale in the southern corner beyond the Guesthouse and Carport.

See Sheet B for Key note description.

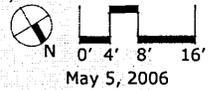


BUEHLER HOUSE & GARDENS

2006 Site Inventory

Plan Enlargement Near Main House
SHEET A

Prepared by PGAdesign^{INC}
Landscape Architects, Oakland, CA



Key Notes:

1	Stone path: random red stone, mortar set
2	Lawn
2	Paving: red concrete, v-shaped, tooled joints
4	Glass panels: set in concrete paving, above pond
5	Large brown fieldstone stepping stones, through and beyond pond
6	Rock edge at pond with fountain
2	Koi pond: former swimming pool
6	Rock edge at pond: 1-foot wide mortared random stone band; planting at pond edge includes Papyrus sp., Canna sp., and Iris pseudacorus
9	Rock garden: plantings include Pinus mugo, Juniperus conferta, Lavendula stoechas, Lamium maculatum, Campanula medium, Azalea sp., Nandina domestica, Bambusa sp., Ceanothus sp., Tecomaria capensis
10	Miniature ornamental wood bridge
11	Fountain tank: source approximately 4-feet above adjacent pavement
12	Pinus sp. tree
12	Downspout projecting over path from building
14	6-inch wide french drain with two-inch river pebbles
15	Gravel paving: white-gray granite aggregate, 1/2-inch diameter
16	Sculpture/Ornament: Japanese
17	Red-colored stepping stones set in concrete path seeded with multi-colored 1/2-inch diameter pebbles
18	Fence: bamboo, 5-foot height
19	Garden area with rocks: dissected-leafed Acer palmatum, Prunus sp., ferns, Viburnum sp., Rhododendrons sp. and Vinca minor

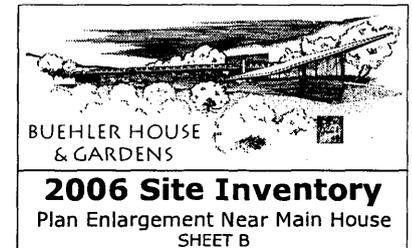
20	Sculpture: Japanese wood-roofed temple on post with 17-inch tall bell
31	Sculpture: Classical style, two women on a bench, white stone
22	Lighting: Japanese style bollards
23	Fence/screen: Japanese style, redwood
24	Granite basin: 24-inch height x 22-inch depth x 36-inch width, Japanese calligraphy on front, with sculpture of two metal birds
23	Planting area: Cedrus sp., dissected Acer palmatum sp., Rhododendron sp., Camellia sp., Azalea sp., ferns, and moss
26	Irrigation: three valve boxes
27	Three specimen Liquidamber styracifolia
28	Bird bath fountain
29	Northern Glade: lawn with impact rotor irrigation on fixed risers, slopes down towards top of creek bank
30	Planting at edge of glade: Primarily Quercus lobata and Aesculus californica; also including: Quercus agrifolia, Cedrus sp., Pinus sp. overgrown ivy and vinca groundcover
31	Leads to gravel path to wooden bridge
22	Planting at living room windows: Viburnum sp., Betula jackmontii, and Prunus cerasifera
53	Native vegetation: unkempt, overrun with ivy, steep downslope condition
34	Concrete paving: seeded with pebbles
35	Raised triangular shaped planter: concrete walls, two large ornamental rocks, and metal Japanese lantern
36	Sculpture: Japanese style, stone
27	Covered parking for four cars: steel frame, corrugated metal roof, no walls
38	Planter: concrete block walls, Juniperus sp.

30	Concrete paving seeded with pebbles
40	Utility building
41	Glass house
42	Gravel path
43	Wooden boardwalk
44	Lumber pile
45	Concrete path: two-feet wide
46	Planting area: sloped, Quercus sp. and Ligustrum sp.
42	Concrete curb
48	Driveway: concrete paving, heavily seeded with multi-colored 1/2-inch pebbles, unseeded band
49	Driveway: asphalt paving
30	Concrete turf block
31	House number with integrated mailbox and wall
52	Stand of Sequoia sempervirens
52	Stair: wood timber with aggregate treads and ten risers
54	Path: gray decomposed granites fines with moss
55	Planting: Juglans sp., Ligustrum sp., Prunus sp., Sequoia sempervirens near creek, and ivy groundcover
36	Irrigation: impact rotors
57	Fallen trees
58	Occasional large brown fieldstone in planting area
59	Entry walk: red colored concrete
60	Concrete block wall with ivy
61	Planter: planted with azalea sp., Camellia, sp. and rocks, void above

General Notes:

1. Numerous garden ornaments: Small Rabbits, turtles, and birds are laid about the garden.
2. Courtyard Lighting: 2-foot tall x 8-inch x 10-inch redwood translucent panels. See Key Note 22.
3. Irrigation: Mix of vintages, fixed riser and pop-up style. Automated or partial automated system.
4. Patio Furniture: Metal tables, chairs and umbrella.
5. Moveable Pots: Four blue and white colored glazed Chinese barrels.

See Sheet A for Key noted plan.



BUEHLER HOUSE
& GARDENS

2006 Site Inventory
Plan Enlargement Near Main House
SHEET B

Prepared by PGAdesign^{INC}
Landscape Architects, Oakland, CA