

**Sixth Annual Stanford Historic  
House & Garden Tour  
Sunday, April 25, 2010**



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Anticipating National Preservation Month in May, the annual tour by the Stanford Historical Society's Historic Houses Project offers a rare glimpse into the history and architecture of Old Campus. The tour takes place on Sunday, April 25, from 1 to 4 p.m.

This year's tour—*A Study in Contrasts*—features two fascinating modern residences that blend houses and gardens, as well as three 1920s houses. The pre-1930 houses are featured in the book *Historic Houses V: Southeast San Juan Neighborhood, Stanford University*, available for purchase in advance and on the day of the tour. The book focuses on 21 houses in the southeastern part of the San Juan neighborhood.

Two of the houses were designed in 1936: one by influential modernist architect William Wurster, with extensive gardens by Thomas Church, and the other the innovative Hanna House, acclaimed as one of Frank Lloyd Wright's most original and important works. Two other houses were designed by Charles K. Sumner, with elegant detailing, including one in 1923 colonial revival style and a 1929 stucco-and-tile one in Spanish eclectic period style. The tour will also include a stately 1924 Mediterranean period style house designed by John K. Branner, which has many more recent additions, including an indoor swimming pool and a home theater.

Proceeds from the tour support the Stanford Historical Society's Historic Houses Project, which won a 2007 Governor's Historic Preservation Award.

**A Preview of the Houses Open for the 2010 Tour**

***1936 Frank Lloyd Wright Hanna House***

Hanna House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1936 for Professor Paul Hanna and his wife, Jean, is one of the architect's most successful works. It has features of Wright's Usonian houses, referring to his vision of designing livable, affordable homes of simple, natural materials for the American middle class. This unique house is an early example of Wright's radical experimentation with nonrectangular forms: its plan is based on a flexible grid of hexagons, 26 inches on each side, resembling a honeycomb, without a single right angle. Wright also designed a guest house and "Hobby House," added to the hilltop

property by the Hannas in 1950, and provided plans for the remodeling of the main house in 1957. The Hannas gave their house to Stanford in 1975. It was used as a residence by four university provosts until it was severely damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. After almost 10 years of careful restoration and seismic strengthening, the buildings reopened in 1999. **Please be aware that there are many stairs on the tour of this house.**

Highlights include:

- Wright's innovative hexagonal grid design, evident in the incised concrete slab floor, brick fireplaces, redwood walls, and custom and built-in furnishings
- Open floor plan with variable ceiling heights and floor levels
- Glass walls and clerestory windows with sweeping views of cypress and white oak trees original to the hillside
- Terraces, fountains, and gardens, also designed by Wright, fusing the interior with the outdoors
- Stone garden ornaments acquired by the Hannas in Japan, including a 2-ton lava stone urn from the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, designed by Wright in 1923

### *1936 William Wurster house*

Designed in 1936 by architect William Wurster and his frequent collaborator, landscape architect Thomas Church, this single-story house and its garden are an early example of what became known as the California ranch style, combining an understated simplicity of design, a flowing floor plan, and a blurring of the distinction between the interior and the outdoors. The house is built around Wurster's signature L-shaped "gallery," a multipurpose space lined with floor-to-ceiling doors and windows, which serves as a bridge between the interior and the patio. Other rooms open onto the gallery. The expansive garden was planned as a series of "rooms," each with different plantings and ornamentation. In the 1950s, a guesthouse, garden house, and swimming pool were incorporated into the outdoor space. The current owners, who acquired the property in 1989, have made many improvements, which include an updated kitchen, with careful attention to the spirit of the original design.

Highlights include:

- Wurster's original construction details, such as the gallery's hand-hewn redwood board walls and Saltillo tile floors
- Thomas Church garden, including a restored rose garden and many pieces of garden art and statuary
- The artist/owner's own American Primitive paintings and her eclectic art collection

### *1923 Charles K. Sumner colonial revival style*

This gracious shingled house was so well designed by Charles K. Sumner that it has comfortably sheltered several families over its 87 years without the need for alteration of its original floor plan. Some of Sumner's signature residential design elements are evident: in the elegant detailing around doors, windows, ceilings, and entries, as well as by built-in storage, spacious areas for entertaining, and the square dining room with its circular table.

Sumner liked to say, “It takes both house and garden to make a home”—here, balconies, French doors, windows, and decks invite light and views into every room.

Highlights include:

- Entry with elegantly patterned leaded-glass fanlight and sidelights
- Original Philippine mahogany floors downstairs
- Colonial revival features: gambrel roofs, dormers, and interior trim incorporating carved pilasters and crown pediments
- Built-in cabinets, closets, and cupboards throughout, including a pull-down “gossip seat” below a niche that may have held a telephone

### ***1929 Charles K. Sumner Spanish eclectic period style***

This welcoming house, with off-white stucco walls, red tile roofs, barrel-vaulted ceilings and arched openings, is an example of the Spanish eclectic period style. Sumner worked frequently in this popular style during the latter half of the 1920s. The house is on almost an acre of land, surrounded by fruit trees, roses, and other ornamental plants and trees—it is difficult to believe that this lushly planted property was completely barren when the house was built. The current owners have remodeled the kitchen, baths, and other areas while successfully maintaining the house’s historical integrity.

Highlights include:

- Sumner-designed paneled front door in a contoured recessed niche
- Painted murals on barrel-vaulted ceilings in entry and hall
- Flower-filled courtyard with brick pavers
- Arched display niches in living room walls
- Fountain-pond surrounded by a patio, uncovered by the current owners when their small son fell into a hole in an overgrown area of the garden

### ***1924 John K. Branner Mediterranean period style***

Creeping fig vines cover the stucco walls and almost obscure the red-tiled roof of this stately two-story house, designed by John K. Branner, elder son of Stanford’s second president; the vines impart a timeless quality to the house, as do the original central façade and arched entry under a wrought-iron hanging lantern. But façades can be deceptive—since 1970, the current owner’s additions have nearly quadrupled the 2,750 square feet of the original house. Noteworthy is the 10-year-old home theater building designed by Italian professor of architecture Alberto Pratelli; above it, a second-story bridge connects the master bedroom to a bathroom and closets. The theater’s back garden entrance features four columns under a frieze of creeping fig, echoing the vines that are now beginning to spread over the addition. Between the theater and main house, the curved top on the tall iron gate mirrors the curve of the original double front doors.

Highlights include:

- Stunning solarium and indoor swimming pool with French limestone floor, lined with monumental plants and flooded with light from skylights and multipaned windows
- Two-story entry hall with arched openings and Czech crystal chandelier
- Shelves throughout the house holding the owner's collection of 7,500 books

### **Tour Logistics**

All five houses are within walking distance of one another. Parking and shuttle service are available at Tresidder Union parking lot; pick up the shuttle across from the lot, in front of the Stanford Faculty Club. Shuttles will take tourgoers to the registration point and between the houses as needed. Roads in the area near the tour houses are closed to through traffic, and parking restrictions will be enforced on the day of tour.

*Note: Tourgoers should be aware that these houses may have uneven paths, and stairs without railings. Please wear appropriate footwear.*

For tickets, mail a check (payable to Stanford Historical Society) to Stanford Historical Society, c/o Sweeney, P.O. Box 19290, Stanford, CA 94309. Tickets purchased by April 16 will cost \$20 per person, or \$35 for a ticket plus a copy of *Historic Houses V*; these tickets will be mailed. After April 16 and on the day of the tour, tickets cost \$25, book \$20. Pick up tickets and books at the tour registration desk, 593 Gerona Road, Stanford.

For additional information, visit the Stanford Historical Society's Web site: <http://histsoc.stanford.edu/> or call 650-725-3332 or 650-324-1653. You may also e-mail questions to [cglasser@stanford.edu](mailto:cglasser@stanford.edu) or [susan.sweeney@stanford.edu](mailto:susan.sweeney@stanford.edu)