California Whimsy: Building Storybook Fantasies

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Introduction

Paramount Pictures' *Alice in Wonderland*, released in 1933, opens with a bored Alice stuck in her conventional neo-Palladian house with rusticated quoins. She falls asleep and discovers she can move through a mirror into a magical place quite different and sometimes backwards from the world from which she came. The first house Alice stumbles upon in Wonderland is a miniaturized English thatched cottage with heart-shaped cutouts on the shutters and door (fig. 1). Further along her journey, she joins a tea party at the Mad Hatter's house, which features prominent rolled eaves (fig. 2). The architecture signals the difference between reality and imagination. This film, one of several adaptations of Lewis Carroll's 1865 book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, conveys a particular image of fantasy that actually reflects potent architectural trends of the time. In 1920s and 1930s California, a new architectural style emerged with exaggerated, whimsical, or theatrical qualities, evocative of medieval Europe. It appeared most often in houses or bungalow courts. Historians in the 1970s described this architecture as "dollhouse" or "Hansel and Gretel."[1] More recently, authors use the term Storybook Style, likely because writers often used storybook and fairytale references to explain the architecture. In the midst of California bungalows and Spanish Colonial Revival buildings this is an odd occurrence. This thesis is an examination of the two decades of architectural production in California that situates these Wonderland buildings as part and parcel of a much larger, if previously understudied, architectural phenomenon.

Two million Americans migrated to California in the decade of the 1920s. As a result of new money and new opportunity, the state rapidly developed. Concurrently, with the rise of the

[1] See Sally Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 3-16, 99-114, David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles & Southern California* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1977), and David Gebhard, *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco & Northern California* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1973).

film industry, there was increasing creativity in design and greater exposure to other countries, cultures, and worlds through film. The fantasy world from the screen quickly transferred into domestic architecture through the intermingling of set designers and architects. There was also increased and improved production of children's books, especially fairy tales, featuring highly imaginative designs. All of these factors combined to form the perfect setting for storybook architecture. Sources ranged from films and actual storybooks to images of Europe, either from personal experience or trade journals and architectural magazines. The architecture suggested a desire to return to the world of the child and created a romantic atmosphere. This thesis will argue that this so-called storybook architecture materialized as a specific product of the California context, though the particular attributes of the style do not readily indicate California.

The principal source on the subject is architect Arrol Gellner's *Storybook Style: America's Whimsical Homes of the Twenties*, published in 2001 with a revised edition forthcoming. This is largely a pictorial work intended for public consumption in which Gellner provides some historical context and highlights examples in California and across the country. This is by no means an exhaustive compilation, but it offers the largest survey. Email correspondence with the author revealed that he and photographer Douglas Keister identified neighborhoods in which they expected to find a lot of storybook structures and then drove around documenting houses as they found them.[2] While the narrative is convincing, Gellner does not cite his research sources and scholarly work has given the topic minimal consideration. Though Gellner does not claim ownership of the term "Storybook Style," this is the earliest source to use it. Of course, the word "style" is somewhat problematic given the wide range of structures and the subjective inclusion of buildings in this category.

[2] Arrol Gellner, email message to author, October 5, 2015.

Additional references to storybook architecture can be found in architectural surveys of the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, and anthologies of California architects. However, it has not been widely studied for a variety of reasons. First of all, this aesthetic mode quickly disappeared with the onset of the Great Depression. Secondly, little known architects and builders were often the propagators of the style. It is not serious or academic or distinctly modern, which may explain its omission from many architectural historical accounts. The examples outlined in this thesis were also not often discussed as they were built, which may alternately indicate that this architecture was not as unusual as present-day writers believe. Moreover, information is also somewhat difficult to locate, given the varied nomenclature used to describe these buildings.

David Gebhard was the biggest champion of these oddities by including them in his architectural surveys and his introductions and chapters in numerous histories of California. In his 1973 guide to San Francisco architecture, he asserts that this architecture represents a "high point of sorts" and that this aesthetic mode has contributed to architecture through its "space, scale, mystery and surprise," even though it has not yet been adequately acknowledged.[3] His dominant term is "Hansel and Gretel," which implies charm, quaintness, and a hint of something sinister, evoking images of childhood and fantasy. He also employs the phrases "Cinderella style" and "Mother Goose style"; thus, its current framing as storybook or fairy tale architecture likely began here.[4] In his contribution to Sally Woodbridge's *Bay Area Houses*, published in 1976, he calls the structures "medieval dollhouses," which implies both time and scale and again suggests childhood as well as the past.[5] This phrase also introduces an element of playfulness.

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[3] Gebhard, *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco*, 20.
[4] Ibid., 159, 207, 211, and 254. "Cinderella style" refers to Carr Jones' work, and "Mother Goose style" refers to several structures, including Thornburg (Normandy) Village.
[5] Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses*, 100.

Gebhard further notes the architects' tendency to miniaturize, which aptly explains why the style is more widely identifiable in smaller-scaled houses. Because of the minimized scale, he also calls them "Alice houses," in reference to *Alice in Wonderland*, to suggest that adults are walking around in a world to which they do not belong.[6]

The nomenclature associated with these structures certainly adds to the intrigue of the phenomenon and immediately conjures up storybook images. It is also remarkable how often the term "whimsy" crops up in describing this and other California architecture from the early twentieth century. Oddly enough, Gebhard does not associate these structures with whimsy though his successors use the term freely. Perhaps this is because the term implies that it was a passing fad with minimal importance, contrary to Gebhard's more deeply held belief in its significance. It may also be contentious to call this "storybook architecture" because this term does not account for the great impact of film on its development. Yet the cinematic examples that most closely correspond to the domestic trend derive from literary examples, often children's books or stories later popularized for children. It is important to note one problematic term, which is "Disneyesque" or "Disneyland," as the houses predate the origin of the Disney Studios.[7] As will be discussed later in this thesis, it is likely that the houses influenced Disney rather than the other way around.

So which characteristics constitute storybook architecture? Though individual traits are found in other architectural styles, it is the combination of elements that gives a building's composition that extra bit of whimsy. These houses are often smaller in scale, though not always. Characteristics include rolled eaves, curved rooflines, prominent chimneys, unusual

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[6] Ibid., 102.
[7] Arrol Gellner and Douglas Keister, *Storybook Style: America's Whimsical Homes of the Twenties* (New York: Viking Studio, 2001), 1. Dave Weinstein and Linda Svendsen, *Signature Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2006), 79.

half-timbering, steep or jerkinhead gables, eyebrow roofs, castellated forms such as turrets and crenellations, rounded doorways lined with stone, sporadic stones across a stucco wall, and an overall mixing of materials. These components can produce infinite outcomes, making it difficult to firmly identify structures as storybook and causing the bounds to be rather malleable.

Two of these features warrant further explanation for their effects in this aesthetic mode. First, rolled eaves and curved rooflines are evident in many examples in their attempt to simulate thatch. Another name for this element is seawave roof. Because it was not prudent to use actual thatch, contoured eaves covered with shingles achieved a similar effect. Daniel Reiff, in his history of house plan books, suggests that this detail immediately evokes both a "quaint English cottage" and coziness.[8] This was a fairly common element of vernacular English cottages that, in the American context, conveys a sense of the Old World. Though these imitation roofs were employed prior to the 1920s, storybook architects certainly embraced the detail and used it freely. When used in small-scale and in combination with one or two other identifiable characteristics, they immediately evidence the storybook aesthetic.

Secondly, the mixing of materials, particularly with stone, is a key component of the composition and what sets this aesthetic mode apart from its contemporaries. When stones are used, they are not placed neatly in rows of the same size and shape. The stones often vary in size and shape as well as density as they are scattered across a surface. This varied concentration of stones creates textured and uneven surfaces, suggesting growth over time and a connection to the earth. As a result, this element contributes to the aged effect of the structure and makes storybook architecture distinctive.

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[8] Daniel D. Reiff, *Houses from Books: Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738-1950: A History and Guide* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 229-30.

Most storybook buildings are not attributed to specific architects, but those that are tend to be the exemplars as well as the most distinctive. In surveying numerous structures, three trends are most common: first, English Tudor or Cotswold Cottage, exemplified by Hugh Comstock; second, French Normandy Revival or Provincial, illustrated by the work of William R. Yelland, Sidney and Noble Newsom, and Wallace Neff; and third, Carr Jones' brick houses, which do not reflect a particular region. There is certainly deviation from these models as well as overlap across storybook designs.

This thesis is structured temporally and geographically. Chapter One presents the California context in the 1920s to explain the combination of events and sentiments that set the stage for this architecture to emerge. Storybook architecture offered a third alternative to the prevailing trends of Spanish Colonial Revival and Modernism. Chapter Two investigates the advent of the film industry in Los Angeles and its impact on the development of this architectural tradition. Set designs and domestic architecture enjoyed a mutually dependent relationship that contributed to the perpetuation of fantasy and prosperity of both fields in Los Angeles. Chapter Three explores the simultaneous development of storybook architecture in San Francisco, the impact of children's book illustrations on the architecture of Carmel, and the other key designers in the area. Northern California features an equally potent array of storybook structures that has been under acknowledged. Chapter Four will address the perpetuation of storybook elements and intersections of producers and consumers in creating this alternate mode. The publication of Walter Wilbur Dixon's book of plans around 1925 offered three exterior styles — English, Colonial, and Spanish — and contributed to the spread of storybook elements across California. These traits also appeared in magazines as well as mail-order catalogs, revealing the

pervasiveness of the features. These publications affirmed the potency of this California-bred architectural practice.

Storybook architecture is revivalist with a twist, revealing great creativity as well as an interest in fantasy through the domestic realm. These quirky houses recall the past but do not totally replicate old forms. They embody the myth of California — the pursuit of happiness rooted in the state's origins during the Gold Rush — and the belief that anything was possible in the 1920s.[9] The popularity of the architecture is demonstrated by the great spread of storybook details across the country in the subsequent decade. Furthermore, there has been a resurgence in recent years, with numerous modern iterations exhibiting an even greater degree of whimsy and cartoon aesthetic as a result of newer technology. Despite its nationwide proliferation, it was the confluence of events and ideas in California that gave this type of revival architecture a strong footing, resulting in the largest collection of storybook architecture in this state alone.

[9] Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 68.

Chapter 1: California Dreaming

Two prominent architectural styles have dominated the narrative of California architecture in the 1920s: minimalist Modernism and the romantic escapism of the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revivals. While architectural historians note the romanticism of storybook architecture, this thesis instead proposes that the perpetuators and consumers of storybook architecture were actively engaging in modernity by participating in the technological advances of the film and print industry. Though the results are far from modernist, they are indeed modern. This chapter will address the historical context and Chapters Two and Three will delve further into these two influential industries. Thus, storybook architecture presented a third aesthetic mode for Californians as the state evolved.

Modernism was a specific reaction to revivalism in its emphasis on individualism. The core tenet is functionalism – every element serves a purpose. Most designs comply with an orthogonal grid and basic geometry. It is rational and industrial, corresponding with the simultaneous construction of steel and glass skyscrapers in cities. Components include flat roofs, uninterrupted surfaces, many windows, especially in bands, and visual regularity.[10] This architecture is without ornament and without color. It is in every way the aesthetic opposite of storybook architecture.

The icon of this movement in California is undoubtedly Richard Neutra's Lovell House (fig. 3). Los Angeles critic Esther McCoy pioneered the documentation of his work, which has been continued by architectural historian Thomas S. Hines in *Richard Neutra and the Search for*

[10] See Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).

Modernism.[11] Neutra's work is characterized by the post and beam, cantilevered roof slabs, and the use of steel, concrete, stucco, and glass. The Lovell House, conceived in 1927 and completed in 1929, was the first completely steel-framed house in the country.[12] It is prefabricated and dominated by bands of concrete and windows. The entire structural system is evident and the building is transparent and reflective. It is the epitome of ahistoricism.

Meanwhile, the Mission Revival was envisioned as a distinctly Californian architectural tradition. Just as the East Coast was enamored with the Colonial Revival, recalling the architecture of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America, California also sought a colonial tradition. However, instead of a patriotic bent, they sought the romantic myth of the Mission as the mode.[13] This style features undecorated stucco surfaces and arched openings, such as in the iconic Mission Inn in Riverside (fig. 4). Mission Revival architecture flourished in California after the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915.

Soon after, the Mission Revival gave way to the Spanish Colonial Revival in the domestic realm. This style exhibits whitewashed stucco surfaces, red terracotta roof tiles, and colonnaded arches. A prime example is Santa Barbara, which after experiencing a devastating earthquake in 1925, was completely rebuilt into a Spanish Colonial Revival reverie.[14] George Washington Smith was prolific in this mode, as evident in his Casa del Herrero of 1925 (fig. 5). Ornamental detail, when present, was secondary to the simple surfaces and volumes.[15]

In considering the clients and producers of storybook architecture in California, it was primarily the middle-class and the elite who participated in this fantasy. It is therefore

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[11] See Esther McCoy, *Richard Neutra* (New York: G. Braziller, 1960), and Thomas S Hines and Richard Joseph Neutra, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture: A Biography and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
[12] Hines and Neutra, *Richard Neutra*, 81.
[13] David Gebhard and Harriette Von Breton, *Architecture in California, 1868-1968; an Exhibition* (Santa Barbara: Printed by Standard Printing of Santa Barbara, 1968), 16.
[14] Charles Willard Moore, Gerald Allen, and Donlyn Lyndon, *The Place of Houses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 20.
[15] Gebhard and Von Breton, *Architecture in California*, 19.

worthwhile to examine the architectural production for the same demographic on the East Coast. The elite lived in Fifth Avenue mansions in New York City and escaped to Newport to their equally impressive summer cottages. Michael C. Kathrens has well documented this phenomenon and display of fashion and opulence.[16] Notable residences in Newport from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include Marble House designed by Richard Morris Hunt and the Elms designed by Horace Trumbauer — both exemplars of palatial Renaissance Revival residences in the area (fig. 6 and 7).

Though the architectural output and social structure of this world are notably different, the quest for the imaginary was similar. The clients in Newport were seeking glory in the European past to convey power and wealth while the new frontier of the West afforded the opportunity to create new identities. In California, the allusions were more provincial and vernacular, while in the Northeast the references were clearly monumental. Moreover, the California elite had more recently come into their fortunes and were eager to display this new wealth in myriad ways.

The architectural trends and historical events preceding and during the 1920s, and their impact in California specifically, are coincident to the development and subsequent flourishing of storybook architecture. Following World War I, Americans were increasingly attuned to European affairs; many clients and designers had either served in the war or recently traveled there. Due to advancements in printing processes in the late nineteenth century, images of Europe also began to proliferate in trade journals, architectural magazines, and house-plan books.

In 1917, Ralph Adams Cram published a photo album of medieval vernacular French

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[16] See Michael C. Kathrens, *Great Houses of New York, 1880-1930* (New York: Acanthus Press, 2005) and Michael C. Kathrens, *Newport Villas: The Revival Styles, 1885-1935* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009).

architecture called *Farm Houses, Manor Houses, Minor Chateaux and Small Churches from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Centuries in Normandy, Brittany, and Other Parts of France*. This volume was likely quite influential for architects who had not traveled to Europe.[17] His photographs display half-timbering, steep gables, turrets, thatched roofs with eyebrow openings, and a streetscape that bears a close resemblance to William R. Yelland's Thornburg Village in Berkeley (fig. 8 and 67h). American artist Louis Conrad Rosenberg published a comparable volume, *Cottages, Farmhouses, and Other Minor Buildings in England of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries*, in 1923. These English vernacular examples exhibit prominent thatch roofs and eyebrow-esque window and door openings commonly seen in storybook structures of the Cotswold Cottage variety (fig. 9). Together, these publications represent source material that likely inspired storybook design.

The 1920s witnessed many historic revivals across the United States. Moreover, many architects were well versed in numerous styles and could easily maneuver from English to French styles and back again, depending on the client's wishes. Though the Spanish Colonial Revival had a strong following in Southern California, it is worth noting that in San Francisco, the English Tudor, French Provincial and Colonial Revival, were as equally well represented.[18] There was strength in historicism by recalling a proud past, especially as Modernism was simultaneously on the rise. Just as Modernists reacted to the approach of revivalists, it is plausible that storybook architecture, with its emphasis on ornament, emerged as a particular reaction to this new stripped-down style.

Two million people moved to California in 1920s, three-quarters of whom settled in Southern California, and the region was eager to cultivate a strong identity. The population of

[17] Merry Ovnick, "The Mark of Zorro: Silent Film's Impact on 1920s Architecture in Los Angeles," *California History* 86, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 62, footnote 6, doi:10.2307/40495188.
[18] Gebhard, *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco*, 20.

Los Angeles alone doubled from 1920 to 1925 and the number of building permits issued per year grew from 6,000 in 1918 to 62,000 in 1923.[19] About 76 percent of these new permits were for single-family residences. People were drawn to California for new opportunity and the prospect of happiness and lives of leisure.[20] Many came with money, which was largely reinvested in real estate. Perhaps this teeming optimism inspired them to choose more unusual architectural styles. The population influx certainly helped support such a wide variety of structures.

Film historian Merry Ovnick suggests that the rise of preservation and restoration of key American landmarks, such as the continued work of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and Henry Ford's restoration of the Wayside Inn in 1923 and later creation of Greenfield Village, helped fuel the period revivalism and romanticization of the past.[21] These sites contributed to automobile tourism, which also significantly changed the landscape of the American West.[22] The emergence of more fanciful constructions increased tourist appeal, generating income for the Los Angeles area and advertising the region to encourage permanent stays.[23] In fact, city officials expected thirty percent of visitors to stay for at least five months and ten percent to remain permanently.[24]

Needless to say, Los Angeles experienced a quickly growing economy. In the resulting real estate boom, Los Angeles was desperate to prove itself.[25] It was determined to surpass San Francisco as the largest city in California. Historian Kevin Starr writes, "Los Angeles

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[19] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 45.
[20] Starr, *California Dream*, 68.
[21] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 61, footnote 4.
[22] For a critical evaluation of automobile tourism in the West, see Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998).
[23] Stephanos Polyzoides, Roger Sherwood, James Tice, and Julius Shulman, *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles: A Typological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 16.
[24] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 45.
[25] Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California through the 1920's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 60.

envisioned itself, then materialized that vision through sheer force of will."[26] He also depicts Los Angeles as an "Emerald City" and "City of Dreams," further affirming the deep optimism and the belief that anything was possible.[27] This intentional identity creation manifested in a variety of ways, from traditional revivals to storybook architecture.

Without an established architectural convention, it is no surprise that eclecticism reigned in this time period. It was not uncommon to see Spanish missions next to Cotswold cottages across the street from a Swiss chalet and a Colonial Revival plantation house.[28] The coexistence of these historic revivals created an odd, anachronistic atmosphere within neighborhoods and contributed to the overall feeling of fantasy. This eclecticism was partially motivated by nostalgia, likely as a result of the changes brought on by modernization.[29] Historic elements were also familiar and thus conservative amidst change. They suggested stability and permanence, overcoming clients' fears of falling out of fashion.[30]

However, storybook architecture was distinctive from other revivals in its plasticity and sense of humor. It recalled something familiar, but was often difficult to pinpoint. Whereas other revivals more strictly adhere to a specific time and place, this architecture was more inventive. These architects and builders set themselves apart from other revivalist architects through more theatrical creations and the dynamic manipulation of space. Few, if any, storybook structures adhere to the bounds of a rectangular volume. Projecting gables and turrets break up the façades and the lack of symmetry or strong horizontal lines makes each home more distinctive. Storybook architecture is more creative by combining historical aspects in new ways, making it more challenging to identify the allusions.

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[26] Ibid., 69.
[27] Ibid., 89.
[28] Charles Willard Moore, Kathryn Smith, and Peter Becker, eds., *Home Sweet Home: American Domestic Vernacular Architecture* (Los Angeles: Craft and Folk Art Museum, 1983), 74.
[29] Polyzoides et al, *Courtyard Housing*, 191.
[30] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 49.

California hosted two prominent World's Fairs in 1915 – the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco — which also encouraged architectural experimentation. World's Fairs offered a chance to promote regional identity and convey the impression that the host city had come of age.[31] They also exhibited architectural innovation, pride, and fantasy, creating an environment in which these odd constructions could flourish. Notably, the PPIE offered a bold color scheme to contrast the drab gray mandated in the rebuilding effort following the 1906 earthquake, which may have influenced the colorful storybook structures that later appeared (fig. 10). Jules Guerin, renowned for his seductive City Beautiful renderings, was Chief of Color at the PPIE; unsurprisingly he chose vibrant colors inspired by nature instead of the "banker's gray" of the surrounding environment.[32] The selection of Guerin speaks to the dreaminess of the exposition and its host city.

Thus, the 1920s in California was a time of immense growth through both reflection on the past and thinking toward the future. As a result of the plethora of historic revivals, architectural choice was infinite and embraced by the constant stream of new residents. Though the Spanish Colonial Revival and Modernism dominate the existing narrative, there was still room for a third aesthetic to emerge: that which resembled the past but was forward-looking. The major cities, Los Angeles and San Francisco, were highly focused on their own identity creation and development, respectively, and fueled by romance and nostalgia. Of course in Southern California, it was all tied to Hollywood.

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[31] Starr, *California Dream*, 298.
[32] Ibid., 299.

Chapter 2: Once Upon a Time in Hollywood

Both Northern and Southern California were impacted by this period of revivalism, eclecticism, and fantasy, even though their storybook structures vary aesthetically. Reflecting the proximity to film, the examples in Los Angeles are generally larger in scale, with a more detailed development of medieval, castellated features. Quaint English cottages are rare though there are several examples of houses with rolled eaves. In San Francisco, smaller-scaled cottages are much more common with a strong emphasis on mixing materials. Many of these houses suggest great age through the scattered stones and sense of growth on site. The Southern California subset of structures was entirely dependent on the simultaneous influence of Hollywood, which furnished both producers and consumers of storybook architecture as well as source material.

Technological advances increased movie quality and demand in the 1920s and 1930s, and studios achieved unthinkable feats in their ability to transport viewers to different times and places. In fact, the growth of film production necessitated more movie theaters; these buildings often took on even more exotic looks.[33] Studios needed to demonstrate their architectural savvy through the design of their theaters in order to attract viewers to their movies.[34] As a result, Downtown Los Angeles showcased a variety of styles including the Churrigueresque Million Dollar Theatre, built in 1918 by A.C. Martin and William Lee Woollett, the Spanish Gothic United Artists Theatre, built in 1927 by C. Howard Crane, the Aztec Revival Mayan Theatre, built in 1927 by Morgan, Walls, and Clements, and the most famous examples, Sid Grauman's

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[33] Juan Antonio Ramírez, *Architecture for the Screen: a Critical Study of Set Design in Hollywood's Golden Age* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 22.
[34] Maggie Valentine, *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk: An Architectural History of the Movie Theatre, Starring S. Charles Lee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 10.

Egyptian Theatre and Chinese Theatre, completed in 1922 and 1927 respectively by Meyer and Holler (fig. 11-15).[35] As evident in the rapid development of movie theatres and the increased output of films, Hollywood enjoyed economic dominance, inflated the influence of celebrities, and promoted architectural daring. This atmosphere helped promote the rise of storybook architecture.

It was the film industry's move from New York to California that forever changed its trajectory. Southern California offered an ideal climate for shooting year-round, there were a variety of landscapes with which to work, and the constant influx of residents kept wages low. Studio executives were also motivated to distance themselves from their theater roots and their New York-based financing and distribution offices.[36] The California Dream both motivated their move and molded Hollywood as the manifestation of this dream since the area was largely undeveloped. By 1916, more than 60 percent of the industry was located in Los Angeles.

This cross-country move coincided with the professionalization of set design and the field of art direction in the 1910s. Painted flats, which were essentially large canvas backdrops, transformed into three-dimensional creations.[37] By the middle of the decade, art directors were critical members of the production team, managing an estimated 12.5 percent of a standard Hollywood film budget.[38] With increased investment in set design, audiences began to demand precision, realism, and tasteful aesthetics.[39] As a result, in 1918, studios started actively recruiting professional artists and architects, which legitimized the field.[40]

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[35] Ibid., 56.
[36] Wheeler W. Dixon and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, *A Short History of Film*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 31.
[37] Christina Kathleen Wilson, "Cedric Gibbons and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer: The Art of Motion Picture Set Design" (PhD Diss., University of Virginia, 1998), 33.
[38] Donald Albrecht and Museum of Modern Art, *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies* (New York: Harper & Row in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 78.
[39] Wilson, "Cedric Gibbons," 53.
[40] Ibid., 204.

As set design and architectural design blended, they developed a strong mutually dependent relationship. Regardless of professional training, set designers and art directors often followed architects' practice in preparing plans, supervising construction, and finalizing the details.[41] Like architects, they relied on photographs, engravings, and sketches to create realistic settings.[42] Studios also began to accumulate extensive libraries to enable designers to create archaeologically correct design.[43] In fact, bookseller Jacob Israel Zeitlin indicated that MGM spent about a million dollars over twenty years to stock their library.[44] Gladys Percy, the librarian for Paramount, purchased an edition of Diderot's *Encyclopedia* and full sets of the *London Illustrated News* and *Harper's Weekly*, specifically for references to period architecture and costumes. The motivation was that more realistic sets conveyed authenticity and legibility to the film's story.[45]

Though books provided great source material, the increased number of European immigrants to Hollywood in this time period may have also contributed to the sense of realism in the film sets. Perhaps their first-hand knowledge of European vernacular architecture helped supplement the proliferation of printed resources. Historian Donald Albrecht does not explore this aspect in his book, *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies*, but it is worth considering this influence beyond just Americans coming back from Europe after the war. Like other recent transplants to California, these immigrants, including German director Ernst Lubitsch, were motivated by artistic and economic opportunity and their personal experiences were likely invaluable to the development of film sets.[46] In fact, there was a great migration of European directors from several countries in the 1920s. In some cases, like Austrian-born Erich

[41] Ibid., 54.
[42] Ramírez, *Architecture for the Screen,* 45.
[43] Polyzoides et al., *Courtyard Housing*, 14.
[44] Starr, *Material Dreams,* 346.
[45] Wilson, "Cedric Gibbons," 81.
[46] Albrecht and Museum of Modern Art, *Designing Dreams*, 79.

von Stroheim, directors also served as scenario writers and set designers, which indicates their great influence on the structure and story of the film.[47]

Consequently, films produced throughout the 1920s reveal a great sensitivity to realistic set designs. For example, the set for D. W. Griffith's 1921 film *Orphans of the Storm* convincingly portrays a streetscape during the French Revolution (fig. 16). Though this film was produced in Long Island, it is indicative of the greater trend across the film industry. Rex Ingram's film *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, also from 1921, was filmed in Los Angeles (fig. 17). Though partially obscured by the bomb blast, the story's setting is France during World War I, which is conveyed thru vernacular architecture in the foreground and the medieval castle in the background. Finally, Douglas Fairbanks' film *Robin Hood*, released in 1922, showcased arguably the largest set ever built in Hollywood as evident in the scale of this fortified castle (fig. 18).[48] Each of these sets persuasively portrays three-dimensional structures, even though not all sides were likely built.

Architects continued to dabble in set design because it served as a form of advertisement, guaranteeing a wide audience for their designs.[49] Indeed, Albrecht affirms, "No vehicle provided as effective and widespread an exposure of architectural imagery as the medium of the movies."[50] Likewise, set designers also created domestic architecture, executing the skills and ideas they had nurtured on movie sets.[51] Art director William Cameron Menzies worked on numerous films and also designed his own home in Beverly Hills in the Tudor style.[52] Cedric Gibbons, also an art director, designed a beach house for producer Louis Mayer in 1926, a house

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[47] Léon Barsacq, *Caligari's Cabinet and Other Grand Illusions: A History of Film Design*, 1st English language ed. (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976), 51.
[48] Ibid., 57.
[49] Wilson, "Cedric Gibbons," 81.
[50] Albrecht and Museum of Modern Art, *Designing Dreams*, xii.
[51] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 47.
[52] Ramírez, *Architecture for the Screen*, 35.

for producer Irving Thalberg in 1928, and his own house in 1930. Gibbons felt that the design challenges were similar between a private home and a film set, making it easy to justify the transition.[53]

The two fields crossed over in the building for Willat Studio, now known as the Spadena House, designed by art director Harry Oliver in 1921, and intended as a movie set and office for Irvin V. Willat Productions in Culver City (fig. 19).[54] It was later moved to Beverly Hills and became a residence. Willat commented, "We have tried to reproduce a tumble-down structure of two centuries ago, but which will be equipped with the most modern office appurtenances."[55] This quote reveals the intentional anachronism of the venture. As with film, this building was to be ancient in appearance and effect, but fully modern in its mechanisms and systems. Moreover, its deviation from architectural norms clearly evoked an escape from reality into a fantasy world, much like the allure of film.[56] The Willat Studio's architecture was decidedly different from other studios, which ranged from Thomas H. Ince Studios' homage to Mount Vernon to the modern factory aesthetic of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios (fig. 20 and 21). Perhaps this was Willat's attempt to make his studio distinctive from the rest.

Oliver also designed the Tam O'Shanter Restaurant in 1922 with a similarly swooping roofline and dilapidated aesthetic (fig. 22). This fluidity between architects and set designers embodied the power of the California dream, suggesting that this level of fantasy was possible for and by anyone. Consequently, architects and set designers reaped benefits in both fields. Architecture accelerated the sophisticated appearances of films while successful movie sets

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[53] Wilson, "Cedric Gibbons," 133-138.
[54] It should be noted that records are inconsistent, attributing this house to Harry Oliver, Henry Oliver, and also Oliver Hill, misnomers likely all referring to the same individual. Likewise, there is some confusion about Willat, who has been mentioned as Irvin V. Willst, Irvin C. or V. Willat, or Irvin C. Willit. He was the director and his brother, C. A. Willat, was the president. See Julie Lugo Cerra and Marc Wanamaker, *Movie Studios of Culver City*. See also David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1994), 122.
[55] "New Studio is Novelty," *Los Angeles Express*, April 6, 1921, 19.
[56] Ramírez, *Architecture for the Screen*, 22.

encouraged further experimentation in the real world.[57] This also opened doors for a wider range of designers: developers and contractors implemented storybook motifs as much as architects.

The upward trajectory of the field of art direction opened domestic possibilities for its employees. While the film industry was getting settled into Los Angeles in the 1910s and early 1920s, actors occupied modest homes.[58] However, as the industry boomed, it increased their buying power and impacted their design choices. Movie stars and moguls began to build bigger and wilder, motivated to compete with each other and display their success in the business.[59] Moreover, newspapers and magazines publicized actors' homes, establishing a standard of good taste in Southern California.[60] Studios also saw the potential publicity in celebrity housing, such that they made these addresses available to tourists in the 1930s.[61] Thus, the whole industry fueled the success and spread of this fantasy architecture.

This trend also speaks to the rising dependence on the car and the correlating interest in curb appeal. Compelling archways, unusual roofs, and turrets were imaginative and exciting, and the car provided greater access to view these structures. Ovnick suggests, "[T]he period-revival houses of the 1920s, whether of cottage or mansion scale, invited the viewer's eye and imagination to explore each recessed nook, each projected platform, and to reference them to film stories set in faraway times and places."[62] Through increased exposure to films, the general public became more adept at understanding cinematic elements in the everyday.[63] Because storybook houses captured the aesthetic and often the mood of the cinema, these visual cues were easily digestible and intriguing. Furthermore, familiar cinematic elements in the domestic realm

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[57] Polyzoides et al., *Courtyard Housing*, 14.
[58] Bruce Henstell, *Sunshine and Wealth: Los Angeles in the Twenties and Thirties* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984), 81.
[59] Ibid., 81.
[60] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 62, footnote 8.
[61] Henstell, *Sunshine and Wealth*, 83.
[62] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 32.
[63] Ibid., 43.

offered context of time and place.[64] Perhaps most importantly, the smaller scale of many storybook examples was more accessible and human, allowing the viewer to inhabit what had been exclusively a cinematic world.

Though there are numerous examples of one-off storybook architecture, a noteworthy enclave is Hollywoodland, envisioned in April 1923 by developers Tracy E. Shoults and S. H. Woodruff as "one of the most attractive residential sections of the city."[65] The entrance reveals many castellated forms and the Tract Office is overtly English Tudor (fig. 23). Moreover, the sign atop the Tract Office employs a Gothic font, evident to the left of the turreted entrance gates. Hollywoodland attracted many film industry affiliates and was the first themed hillside community in the country.[66] When the neighborhood began, the styles were limited to English Tudor, French Normandy, Mediterranean, and Spanish, among which film historian Mary Mallory suggests the English Tudor was actually the least popular.[67] Style restrictions were critical to the maintenance of Hollywoodland's exclusivity and middle-class affordability. Mallory indicates that the intention was to create "a peaceful fairy tale ambiance" through "storybook homes," as a reflection of their profession and lifestyle.[68]

Propaganda featured in the *Los Angeles Times* reveals much about the material aims of the community. The initial ads present a strong preference for the French-Norman style. As evident in this ad from January 20, 1924, three of the four homes pictured follow this style (fig. 24).[69] Furthermore, the caption reads, "A Home in the Hollywoodland Hills Norman-French Chateau or Hillside Cottage," affirming this style as the predominant option. Another ad, from

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[64] Ibid., 59.
[65] "Opening Great Area to Homes." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* April 01, 1923. http://search.proquest.com/docview/161542204?accountid=14678. For a more comprehensive history of the neighborhood, see Mary Mallory and Hollywood Heritage Inc., *Hollywoodland* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2011).
[66] Mallory and Hollywood Heritage Inc., *Hollywoodland*, 7.
[67] Ibid., 72.
[68] Ibid., 7.
[69] "Display Ad 99 -- no Title." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* Jan 20, 1924. http://search.proquest.com/docview/161596657?accountid=14678.

February 24, 1924, emphasized the stark contrast between the tall skyscrapers in polluted, congested Los Angeles and the healthy and happy chateau-filled environment of Hollywoodland (fig. 25).[70] Though offering the aesthetic of a romantic past, the advertisements also promoted the modern amenities available and encouraged prospective buyers to "Drive in today," revealing the necessity of the car to experience and inhabit this particular environment. The developers were selling a modern life, similar to the Modernists but with a different look.

The neighborhood was initially fairly popular. Interestingly, Einar C. Peterson, the designer of a storybook bungalow court called Studio Court, had a home here, built in 1927 by Harry Muck (this house is to the left of the tract office in fig. 23). Another notable property is Wolf's Lair built circa 1924 for L. Milton Wolf – a full-fledged Norman castle with English Tudor accents, perfect to contribute to the fairy tale atmosphere (fig. 26).[71] Gloria Swanson lived here in a castellated residence as did Humphrey Bogart, whose home boasted rolled eaves (fig. 27 and 28). Mallory asserts, "Creative types could fashion storybook castles to live like the cinematic royalty they were or aspired to be."[72] This was the achievement of the American (or California) Dream.[73]

Wallace Neff also catered to the stars, dotting Pasadena with several French Normandy Revival creations.[74] In Diane Kanner's biography and monograph of Neff's work, *Wallace Neff and the Grand Houses of the Golden State*, which is based on interviews with his descendants and clients, she writes, "Most of his clients wanted nothing more than pure fantasy—the ideal

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[70] "Display Ad 98 -- no Title." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* Feb 24, 1924. http://search.proquest.com/docview/161541077?accountid=14678.

[71] Mallory and Hollywood Heritage Inc., *Hollywoodland*, 60. See "Two Chateaux Planned for Hollywoodland Hilltop." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, January 13, 1924. http://search.proquest.com/docview/161566511?accountid=14678.

[72] Mallory and Hollywood Heritage Inc., *Hollywoodland*, 99.

[73] By March 22, 1925, the advertisements had abandoned the French-Norman motif and decidedly embraced Spanish Colonial. It is unclear if the French-Norman aesthetic had waned or if the development was simply struggling to gain occupants and thus trying a different tactic. See "Display Ad 102 -- no Title." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* Mar 22, 1925. http://search.proquest.com/docview/161601979?accountid=14678. The style restrictions would be lifted by the mid-1930s, See Mallory and Hollywood Heritage Inc., *Hollywoodland*, 45.

[74] A Mediterranean aesthetic would later dominate his portfolio as well as his modernist Bubble Houses.

dream house."[75] Nostalgia and fairy tale romance are highly evident in his work through his manipulation of roofs, bringing them close to the ground, and his use of towers to contain rooms and staircases.[76] Neff had spent five years living and sketching in Europe from 1909 to 1914 before receiving professional training at MIT under Cram from 1915 to 1917. He was fond of sketching vernacular houses, churches, and streetscapes, including this sketch from Gruyères, France, in 1914 (fig. 29).[77] This time in Europe was undoubtedly influential in his later practice.

The standout example from Neff's oeuvre is the Phillip Schuyler Doane house in San Marino, built in 1924 (fig. 30). This was the beginning of his work in the French vernacular. The Doane house is noteworthy for its steep roofline, hint of half-timbering, and inviting archway dividing the house into two wings, visible in the shadow of the tree. A turret-shaped guest room on the main façade dominates the corner of the L-shaped plan. Furthermore, the chimneystack in the living room features sporadic stone placements amidst the stucco wall (fig. 31). Most importantly, the horizontal plane dominates the vertical plane, making the building unusually squat. The theatrical effect derives from the varied volumes and their intersections. Moreover, the eaves drop down to only six feet above the ground.[78] These storybook elements and the variation of spaces almost seem like a film set, or at least provide a dramatic backdrop for everyday life.

The William Goetz house in Bel-Air from 1931 exhibits a similar form, though in brick, and a prominent turret entry with a conical roof at the corner of the building's L-shaped plan (fig. 32). Goetz, a film producer, was married to Edith Mayer, daughter of MGM Studios head, Louis

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[75] Diane Kanner and Wallace Neff, *Wallace Neff and the Grand Houses of the Golden State* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2005), 86.
[76] Gebhard and Winter, *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide,* 416.
[77] See Alson Clark and Wallace Neff, *Wallace Neff, Architect of California's Golden Age* (Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press, 1986), 17, and Wallace Neff, Virginia Steele Scott Gallery, and Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, *Wallace Neff, 1895-1982: The Romance of Regional Architecture.* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1989).
[78] Kanner and Neff, *Wallace Neff*, 239, footnote 3.

B. Mayer. Edith called the house "cha-a-a-r-ming as a postcard picture."[79] Again, the eaves reach fairly low to the ground and the window overhangs mimic the triangular shapes of the turret and the gables. It is certainly a playful composition though the scale is more conventional.

Finally, the 1934 Frederic March house in Los Angeles also suggests a romantic, provincial quality (fig. 33). March and his wife, Florence Eldridge, were both actors. In fact, because March was incredibly successful and able to earn a hundred thousand dollars over the course of a few weeks, Eldridge took a year off in order to plan the house.[80] The decorated gable appears again here in addition to an octagonal tower at the corner of the building's ell. Dormers also protrude from the steep roofs. An article appeared in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on March 31, 1935, titled "Actor's House as Livable as it is Charming" and subtitled "A bit of France in Hollywood."[81] The author, Claire Winslow, writes, "It's the sort of house that pulls at the heartstrings of thousands of us everywhere, because it is so picturesque in its simplicity, so artistic, and so extremely livable." That news of this house reached the Midwest and was considered desirable speaks to the influence of the client and the interest in this architecture.

In Southern California, the storybook mystique also filtered down to the less affluent, largely because the stars made the aesthetic desirable by the masses.[82] It particularly appeared in the form of bungalow courts. Though the bungalow itself has a complicated history in its derivation from the Indian *bangla*, it appealed to the working class in California, allowing individual property ownership even if the amenities were few.[83] The bungalow was another

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[79] Ibid., 129.
[80] Ibid., 163.
[81] Winslow, Claire. "Actor's House as Livable as it is Charming." *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963),* March 31, 1935. http://search.proquest.com/docview/181572415?accountid=14678.
[82] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 49.
[83] For a comprehensive history of the bungalow, see Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

manifestation of the California Dream, standing for financial freedom.[84] As a result, hundreds of bungalows popped up throughout the 1910s and 1920s. As people settled into California, most opted for individual houses as a statement of arrival and proof of ownership.

The courtyard house and bungalow court, however, offered a different concept: shared housing. Gebhard asserts that the bungalow court was a distinctly Southern California invention from around 1910.[85] It provided the opportunity for both indoor and outdoor living, which was ideally suited to Southern California's temperate climate. Moreover, this was appropriate in an urban environment to maximize occupancy on available land and reduce costs. People were increasingly mobile through the rise of the car, which could penetrate the building envelope and enter the court.[86] This creates an anachronistic scene in which Old World-style housing meets new technology, adding to the fantasy and whimsy. These bungalow courts were often low-rise, which was desired given the threat of earthquakes. They also were most often Spanish Revival structures, following the tradition of courtyard housing in Spain. This makes the French and English examples, which are less stoic, more out-of-the-ordinary. Since the court housed multiple clients, this style choice was architect or builder-driven as opposed to client-driven as in some of the house examples.

Notably, prior to 1925, bungalow courts were not built by architects. However, once client income increased and higher echelons of society began to desire the bungalow, architects became more involved.[87] Many bungalow courts could be found near the Hollywood studios. Architect Stephanos Polyzoides muses, "One can imagine camera technicians, extras, and maybe even an aspiring Greta Garbo occupying the smaller units. The elaborate versions in West

[84] Polyzoides et al., *Courtyard Housing,* 16.
[85] See Gebhard and Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles*, 20, and Gebhard and Von Breton, *Architecture in California*, 14. Arthur S. Heineman of Pasadena is credited with popularizing the typology.
[86] Polyzoides et al., *Courtyard Housing,* 4.
[87] Ibid., 9.

Hollywood became the homes of producers and other movie moguls."[88] This was an affordable and desirable option.

Furthermore, the form of the courtyard was a distinct departure from the standalone home and, in a way, created a movie set on its own. It is the clearest demonstration of the translation from film to domestic architecture. Polyzoides asserts that both courtyard housing and film sets employed the same method of western frame and stucco, suggesting the ease of construction. He also equates the thinness and tentative nature of the attachments.[89] For Gebhard, the theatrical quality is in the allusion of single-family homes set in the garden.[90] Because the courts were often closed to the street, aside from the driveway entry, entering the court may have also seemed like entering an alternate world, especially when the style references were medieval. The multiplicity of dwellings and the insularity from the outside world created similar cinematic moments as can be found in Neff's work and other storybook examples.

The most well known storybook bungalow court is the aforementioned Studio Court from 1921 by Danish artist Einar C. Petersen (fig. 34).[91] Gellner suggests that the design was inspired by Petersen's hometown of Ebletoft, Denmark.[92] The entrance façade boasts rolled eaves, a jerkinhead gable, and an eyebrow roof over the driveway entrance. Moreover, there is a slight turret on the western end and an adorably small false window beneath the jerkinhead gable. Upon entering the complex, half-timbering abounds, combining with the irregularly shaped wood shingles and hand-wrought iron details to create the Old World effect (fig. 35). The contrast between the exterior façade and the interior courtyard is intriguing, affirming the experimental nature of these storybook designers.

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[88] Ibid., 10.
[89] Ibid., 6.
[90] Gebhard and Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles*, 20.
[91] Ibid., 204.
[92] Ginny Chien, "And They All Lived Whimsically Ever After," *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 2003. http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jan/19/magazine/tm-oppetersen3.

Another notable example is Robert Sherwood's Disney Court of 1925, located just behind the first Walt Disney studios on Griffith Park Boulevard (fig. 36). It features swooping rooflines, a turret, and half-timbering. It has been suggested that this was the setting for Walt Disney's 1937 film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which was his first full-length animated feature (fig. 37). In fact, the director and three of the film's animators all lived here at one point in time, possibly influencing the design of the cottage of the seven dwarfs.[93] When Snow White discovers the house in the film, she even exclaims, "Oh it's adorable! Just like a doll's house."[94] However, the visual evidence is not compelling. Upon closer examination of the cottage in the film, it clearly captures storybook romance with its thatched roof, oblique angles, half-timbering, hearts cut out of the shutters, and a tiny rooftop birdhouse near the main entrance. However, its massing is actually more similar to the entrance to Studio Court and thus only matches the spirit of Disney Court.

Walt Disney himself lived in an arguably storybook house, built in 1932, by F. Scott Crowhurst in Los Feliz near the Disney Studios (fig. 38). Perhaps Crowhurst was inspired by Neff with the turret entry topped with a steeply-pitched conical roof at the corner of an L-shaped plan. The roof plane does not reach towards the ground, but the resemblance is clear. The roofs above the window bays also protrude from the main roof in an unusual way. This example of French provincial storybook architecture suggests that similar inspiration for Disney's films is not far-fetched.

Returning to Disney Court, its architecture actually bears a striking semblance to Christopher Columbus Howard's Stonehenge Apartments in Alameda, near San Francisco, from 1927 to 1929, though no direct relationship has been found (fig. 39 and 40). Stonehenge is

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[93] Chris Nichols, "Cottage Industry," *Los Angeles Magazine* 51, no. 12 (December 2006): 40.
[94] *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, directed by David Hand et al. (1938; Burbank, CA: Buena Vista Home Video, 1983), DVD.

comprised of standalone, two-story cottages with garage access in the back. A rustic stone arch marks the entrance and identifies the name of the complex and the pastoral landscape includes a central fountain. The site plans of Stonehenge and Disney Court are fairly similar as well as the emphasis on the landscape.[95] The color and material palette is also comparable. Due to the great success of this complex, Howard built its neighbor Stoneleigh in 1931 and Lincoln Court further down the street in 1941. There are 27 homes in total.[96]

Two final designers worth noting are F. Pierpont and Walter S. Davis. Walter served in Europe in World War I and was particularly taken with the vernacular architecture in Côte d'Or. In recalling his time in France, Walter writes, "[W]e were greatly imprest with the effects of time, the weather and vegetation on the tile and thatch roofs […] we speculated upon just how we could imitate in Los Angeles the colorful work of Kindly time."[97] Upon his return, he and his brother became active in Los Angeles residential design. They created a storybook enclave of five cottages called the French Village in 1920 on Highland Avenue at the entrance to the Cahuenga Pass (fig. 41).[98] The turrets and swooping rooflines are very similar to both Disney Court and Stonehenge Apartments, and according to Walter, the shingles are multicolored to recreate the rainbow of hues observed in France.

As these myriad examples show, architectural theatricality was alive and well in the domestic realm in 1920s Los Angeles. The aforementioned dwellings are a small subset of the storybook structures that have been identified, but the primary examples whose creator is known. The rising film industry had a direct and important impact on the rapid proliferation of whimsical and fantastical houses of all scales. Moreover, the Hollywood elite were the main perpetuators

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[95] According to Gellner, Howard employed Dixon designs, which are discussed in Chapter 4, though the Stonehenge elevations are not very similar to those presented by Dixon. See Gellner and Keister, *Storybook Style*, 106.
[96] Ibid., 109.
[97] Walter Swindell Davis, "A Small Cement House in Los Angeles, California," *House Beautiful* 48 (September 1920), 198.
[98] Polyzoides et al., *Courtyard Housing*, 103. See also "The Lost French Village of Hollywood," *Paradise Leased*, December 9, 2010, https://paradiseleased.wordpress.com/2010/12/09/the-lost-french-village-of-hollywood/.

of this aesthetic tradition, driving its development through their participation in a modern industry. It is important to note that not everyone was a fan. Richard Neutra, in particular, was clearly offended by the plethora of historical revivals, suggesting that architectural tastes had become confused in 1941.[99] Critics aside, it was clearly a beloved period for housing in the 1920s for movie stars and laymen alike.

[99] Albrecht and Museum of Modern Art, *Designing Dreams*, 84.

Chapter 3: Hansel and Gretel and Other Stories in the San Francisco Bay Area

While Gellner asserts that storybook architecture started in Los Angeles and spread northward, the development was actually concurrent, sharing similar as well as different inspirations. Recollections of Europe were equally popular. However, Hollywood was not the driving force. Instead, the intellectual elite helped fuel greater eclecticism. Moreover, the San Francisco Bay Area boasts a greater number of known architects, designers, and builders who were more consistently committed to the aesthetic. There are also entire blocks that exhibit the characteristic features. In this way, the San Francisco collection of storybook structures has a stronger footing in California and was more influential in the ultimate spread across the country.

One of the most popular examples of storybook architecture can be found in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. Hugh Comstock built the Doll House in 1924 for his wife's extensive rag doll collection, which had started as a hobby and blossomed into a booming business (fig. 42). This was the first of about thirty so-called "fairy tale cottages" that Comstock built in the area.[100] His source of inspiration was British illustrator Arthur Rackham whose illustrations he had admired as a child. Given the high density of storybook structures in Carmel, it is worthwhile to examine the development of the town and its key players to understand how Comstock's style materialized.

Additionally, there has not been a study of the influence of children's literature on this architectural tradition. This is surprising given the countless examples of storybook imagery used by historians to describe the architecture. By using Carmel as an example and situating these fairy tale cottages within the greater context of children's literature, we can better

[100] This term was first used by Joanne Mathewson in her first edition of *The Fairy Tale Houses of Carmel*, published in 1977. She published a revised edition in 2002. Subsequent historians perpetuated the terminology.

understand the motivation behind this architecture and its subsequent popularity across California and beyond. These direct and indirect references to children's book illustrations emphasize the power of storybook architecture to offer a retreat into a fantasy world and reveal a compelling source of inspiration for these whimsical creations.

It is no surprise that these charming cottages secured a strong position in Carmel. Its foundation as an artist community established a romantic atmosphere that has been captured and perpetuated in several historical and pictorial guides. Authors and photographers cannot help but fall in love with this seaside town, describing it as a "utopia," a "misty village," an "enchantress with seductive guile," and a "Story Book Hamlet in the forest."[101] Certainly, there is something romantic and quaint about a town that uses intersections, such as Sixth and Ocean, instead of numbered street addresses and house names such as "Top of the World" and "The Birthday House."

Carmel came into being in 1888 when developer S. J. Duckworth attempted to brand it as a "Catholic Summer Resort" along with promises of the railroad's impending arrival.[102] The nearby town of Pacific Grove, which had been founded by Methodists in 1875, likely inspired his goal of a religious enclave near the Carmel Mission. However, his economic enterprise did not take off, the railroad was not built, and he ultimately left in 1894.[103] Six years later, real estate promoter James Franklin Devendorf and lawyer Frank Powers of San Francisco bought most of Duckworth's lots to create a summer town for academics and artists. This target audience would be the key to the town's success. Devendorf and Powers hoped Carmel would

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[101] Linda Leigh Paul, *Cottages by the Sea: The Handmade Homes of Carmel, America's First Artist Community* (New York: Universe, 2000), 10; Mike Barton, *Carmel's Fairy Tale Cottages* (Boulder, CO: Boulder Press, 2011), 5; Eva L. Dunbar, "Carmel Mosaic," in *Carmel by the Sea*, ed. Emil White (Carmel, CA: Emil White, 1958), 21; Joanne Mathewson, *The Comstock Fairy Tale Cottages of Carmel* (Corral de Tierra, CA: Micki & Co., 2002), v.
[102] Carol Kobus, "Carmel-Village of Romance," in *Carmel by the Sea*, ed. Emil White, 10.
[103] Ibid., 14.

be a small, friendly community and the ideal family vacation spot.[104] Powers' wife, Jane Gallatin, even opened the first art studio in Carmel, igniting the town's artistic tradition. This alternate approach appealed to a sense of escapism and offered a respite from city life.

Devendorf and Powers formed the Carmel Development Company in 1903 and began selling the lots. Word spread and the artists quickly flocked to Carmel. The company also targeted "the School Teachers of California and other Brain Workers at Indoor Employment."[105] The marketing suggests a desired demographic from the middle class. However, realizing that this demographic was not enough, they leaned on their friendships with faculty at Stanford and Berkeley, which helped sustain the community given their higher socioeconomic statuses. They were aiming for a cultured set who could afford a second home by the sea in addition to the bohemian artists who contributed to the overall atmosphere.

Devendorf and Powers were also motivated to create a community that upheld the values of the Arts and Crafts movement, favoring simplicity and living in harmony with nature.[106] In order to accomplish this goal, they expanded and reoriented Duckworth's initial grid plan to better accommodate the natural terrain and improve drainage.[107] This physical adjustment also improved the functionality of the layout. The Arts and Crafts influence is also evident in the use of local materials and handcraftsmanship favored by Devendorf and Powers. Many of the early summer cottages displayed such Arts and Crafts details as board-and-batten wall cladding, open porches, and horizontal bands of windows (fig. 43).[108] Moreover, Charles Sumner Greene and Julia Morgan, among other Arts and Crafts practitioners, completed commissions here during the early years.

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[104] Paul, *Cottages*, 24.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., 26, and Steve Shapiro, *Carmel: A Timeless Place* (San Luis Obispo, CA: Central Coast Press, 1998), 39.
[107] Paul, *Cottages*, 39.
[108] Kent Seavey, *Carmel: A History in Architecture* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2007), 47.

Although Comstock receives much of the credit for Carmel, there are several other structures that predate or were contemporary to Comstock's first house. Builder Lee Gottfried constructed the Carmel Weavers Studio in 1922 (fig. 44). It exhibits false half-timbering and a wavy wood-shingle roof designed to look like thatch. It was moved in front of the Theatre of the Golden Bough on Ocean Avenue – the main street in town – and expanded to include a fireplace and ticket booth (fig. 45).[109] The addition created asymmetry and incorporated a protruding volume in the rear, and the curvy roof developed fully into rolled eaves. The rear chimney was composed of projecting irregular bricks, whose rough edges suggest age. The design notably references the Tudor style but with several inventive twists.

Michael J. Murphy, builder for the Carmel Development Company, also influenced the development of Carmel architecture. Inspired by illustrator Edmund Dulac, Murphy built the Seven Arts Shop in 1924 for Edward Kuster in the Court of the Golden Bough, adjacent to the Carmel Weavers Studio (fig. 46). This structure features a steeply pitched roof, rolled eaves, a turret-like entrance overhang, a miniature turret on the roof, and a rounded window.[110] In fact, this building is the mirror image of an illustration Dulac completed in 1911 in *Stories from Hans Andersen* (fig. 47).[111] Perhaps he reversed the image to avoid directly copying the illustration, or this orientation may have better suited the site.

Gottfried is also credited with the Bloomin' Basement of 1925, the final structure in the Court of the Golden Bough (fig. 48).[112] This flower shop was built for novelist Harry Leon Wilson's wife, Helen. It exhibits rolled eaves, a curved entry, and a rounded door – elements that would appear in later storybook constructions. Given the clients of these structures and the

[109] Ibid., 74. Today, the structure is home to the Cottage of Sweets.
[110] The Seven Arts Shop is now home to the Tea Rose Collection shop.
[111] No source has identified the specific illustration thus far. Most only mention Dulac or indicate that the design was modeled after a Swedish folk tale, which is inaccurate as Andersen was Danish.
[112] The Bloomin' Basement is now home to Portabella Restaurant.

proximity to the town's major theater, it is clear that the creative types of Carmel were enchanted by the artistic charm of these buildings. Furthermore, Daisy Bostwick referred to this cluster of shops as "A bit of Old Europe" in an article in the *San Francisco Bulletin* in April 1924, suggesting its success in conveying the message of these revival-esque structures.[113] The accomplishments of Gottfried and Murphy helped pave the way for the development of Comstock's own particular style.

Comstock, a rancher from Yolo County, California, was visiting his artist sister, Catherine, and her husband, George Seideneck, when he met Mayotta Brown. Mayotta was the creator of "Otsy-Totsy" rag dolls, which had become immensely popular, attracting buyers from Los Angeles and San Francisco.[114] They soon married and, in 1924, Mayotta asked her husband to build a tiny cottage to store and display her dolls, which had begun to take over their house (fig. 49). Her intention was to showcase the dolls "in their own environment."[115] It would appropriately be named the Doll House and later changed to Hansel for reasons unknown.

Carmel historian Kent Seavey proposes that Hansel was initially a tiny shop. This is a reasonable supposition given that the initial building permit approved in 1924 was for construction totaling $100.[116] City records from March 1925 reveal another permit approved on the same lot for Hugh Comstock, this time for $400.[117] It is unclear if there were one or two additions to the original structure, but the current plan includes a living area, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen on the first floor, and a partial loft for storage (fig. 50).[118] Though it may have been

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[113] Seavey, *Carmel*, 69.
[114] The *Monterey Peninsula Review* suggests buyers came from the "big cities" in the article "Comstock Quaint." See also L.A. Momboisse, "Carmel by the Sea – Fairy Tale Cottages of Hugh Comstock – Names Locations and Maps," *Carmel By The Sea: Adventures of a Home Grown Tourist*, March 4, 2013, http://carmelbytheseaca.blogspot.com/2013/03/carmel-by-sea-fairy-tale-cottages-of.html
[115] Paul, *Cottages*, 88.
[116] Mathewson, *Comstock*, 2a.
[117] Ibid., 1a.
[118] Ibid., iii and 2a. Carmel historian Joanne Mathewson indicates that the living room and bedroom may have been added at different times, but does not provide further evidence to support this claim. See also Linda Hartong, "The Floorplan for Hansel –

intended as a commercial outlet, it became a functional residence, possibly for guests. In 1925, Comstock also built his own residence around the corner from Hansel, today called Obers, which may explain why Hansel's door faces south towards the house, and began construction on his studio to the east of his house in 1927 (fig. 51).

Comstock was not a trained architect or builder, but his sister and brother-in-law had built their house in Carmel so he and Mayotta followed suit. It is fitting that the initial structure was not even intended to house people; it merely offered a blank canvas on which Comstock could explore his ideas. He soon followed "Hansel" with "Gretel," which served as a guesthouse to accommodate their increasingly curious relatives (fig. 52). This aesthetic was unusual, even whimsical, and requests for more Comstock cottages began to come in. It is believed that Comstock did not build more than 12 cottages himself and eventually trained unskilled carpenters in his methods because they were more willing to break from convention.[119]

What are the key features of a Comstock cottage? Most of the houses are small and wood-framed with steeply pitched, often sagging, gable roofs and stucco walls, such as in Our House and Marchen House, both built in 1928 (fig. 53). They often feature arched doorways with curvy molding, complementing the half-timbering on the walls, which is also slightly curved. Several of the houses exhibit rolled eaves and false shutters, occasionally with hand-carved cutouts of hearts. The most critical piece is the chimney, made from local Carmel stone, which adds a textural richness to the whole ensemble. These components differ from the standard Craftsman tradition that was popular at the time and are firmly enveloped in the greater storybook architecture trend.

Hugh Comstock's First 'Fairy House in the Woods,'" *Once upon a time..Tales from Carmel by the Sea*. April 6, 2011, http://talesfromcarmel.com/2011/12/06/the-floorplan-for-hansel-hugh-comstocks-first-fairy-house-in-the-woods/.

[119] Lillian Rasmussen, "Hugh White Comstock, 1893-1950," (Paper, Monterey Peninsula College, n.d.), 2.

Through his preference for natural materials, Comstock intended the houses to look like they had grown on site.[120] This underscores the Arts and Crafts focus on the relationship of structure to nature. His houses are often set back and hidden among the trees. Despite a lack of training, Comstock built houses that endured, and he was bold enough to experiment with various building techniques. In particular, he used heavy burlap troweled over with plaster and pine needles to create his signature texture on the interior walls of the houses.

Though none of Comstock's houses are exact imitations of Rackham's illustrations, they share a similar scale and setting within nature. Heart-shaped cutouts on the shutters are evident in Comstock's Our House as well as in a Rackham illustration in the Brothers Grimm's *Little Brother and Little Sister and Other Tales* published in 1917 (fig. 54). One can easily picture the elves from the drawing peeking their heads out of Sunwiseturn or the Pink Comstock (fig. 55). Similarly, Rackham's "Building the House for Maimie" from 1906 captures the elfin scale of Comstock's cottages (fig. 56). Finally, his illustration for *Hansel and Gretel* in 1909 reveals irregular stones that comprise the chimney and depicts the house tucked away amongst nature (fig. 57). The correlation between the illustrations and Comstock's work is clear.

There is a dramatic quality to Comstock's work that is exemplified by the structure on Ocean Avenue that is now home to the Tuck Box Tea Room, completed in 1926 (fig. 56). This was first used either as his office or for additional display space for the "Otsy-Totsy" dolls.[121] It then became a restaurant called Sally's around 1928 followed by the Tuck Box in the 1940s.[122] The swoop of the roofline is most exaggerated here and emphasized by the unusual shape of the doorway to align with the angle of the roof. Comstock's design suggests a jerkinhead gable, but

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[120] "Comstock Quaint," *The Monterey Peninsula Review*, February 2, 1984, A-14.
[121] "About the Tuck Box," 2009, http://www.tuckbox.com/about/about.htm.
[122] "Sally's Tea Room Now The Tuck Box Carmel Circa 1928," from California Views Mr Pat Hathaway Archives - Lewis Josselyn of Carmel Calif., http://fineartamerica.com/featured/sallys-tea-room-now-the-tuck-box-carmel-circa-1928-california-views-mr-pat-hathaway-archives.htm.

it is really more of an overhang, as if the structure is topped with a witch's hat. Moreover, the roof when viewed from the side displays clear undulation, which is complemented by the hourglass-shaped chimneystack and curved timber ornament on the façade. In reviewing the building for his guide to San Francisco architecture, Gebhard aptly calls it "a perfect Hollywood stage set," underscoring the theatricality and the artifice of the design, and drawing a connection to the simultaneous domestic developments in Los Angeles.[123] Indeed, this commercial structure and its adjacencies, a garden shop and a kiosk, also built by Comstock in 1929 and 1931 respectively, form a courtyard that fully surrounds the viewer in the fantasy world like a film set.

Upon completion of this building, the local newspaper, the *Carmel Pine Cone*, dubbed Comstock the "Builder of Dreams."[124] Carmel, conceived as a dreamy getaway, now offered fantasy architecture to match and a true escape from the humdrum realities of the world. As a small community, word traveled fast and Comstock cottages became quite trendy. Writers, artists, and actors pursued him to acquire their own Comstock cottage and the commissions gradually grew in size and cost over the course of the 1920s and 1930s. Each design was unique, though the majority aligned with English-style cottages. Though few of the clients have been noted, businesswoman Elsbeth Rose commissioned Sunwiseturn after seeing Our House and actress Constance Ferris built and named Curtain Call in 1929 as a refuge from Hollywood (fig. 59).[125] East Coast investor W. O. Swain commissioned five units in 1928 in the eastern section of the block bounded by Ocean Avenue, Santa Rita Avenue, and Sixth Avenue.

Part of the charm of these houses today can be found in the rich descriptions provided by Carmel historians. Regarding Comstock's The Tiny Gem, built in 1928, Joanne Mathewson

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[123] Gebhard, *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco,* 459.
[124] Rasmussen, "Hugh," 2.
[125] Paul, *Cottages*, 110; Mary Schley, "Tour Affords Entry to Comstock, Murphy and Wright Houses," *Carmel Pine Cone*, June 22, 2012, 8A; Lisa Crawford Watson, "Raising the Curtain on a Neglected Comstock," *Carmel Pine Cone*, "In Your Dreams" supplement, June 13, 2014, 8.

writes, "It looks as if it is from a page out of a Victorian children's book."[126] She adds, "Flared eaves and undulating ridgelines with wood shingles evoking patterns of thatch enhance the desired Fairy Tale effect."[127] In reference to the entire collection of cottages, Linda Leigh Paul suggests, "A feeling of 'fairyland' rusticity made itself known."[128] These comments demonstrate that Comstock and Murphy's fairy tale inspirations are legible in their designs. By delving deeper into concurrent developments in children's literature, we can uncover why these inspirations are noteworthy and understand that the advent of storybook architecture corresponded to an important time in children's literature.

This period of storybook architecture fits within the Golden Age of children's literature, during which it was validated as a genre. Franklin K. Mathiews, librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, convinced the American Association of Book Publishers to create the first National Children's Book Week in 1919.[129] This promotional event stimulated a lot of activity in the realm of children's literature. Additionally, the Newbery Medal was established in 1922 to honor achievement in the field. Moreover, public libraries began to accommodate children's sections while publishing houses started children's divisions.

Several scholars attribute the success of these divisions and the increased quality of children's literature to the new female editors in charge.[130] Previously, the best children's books were imported from Europe. Under this new leadership, American writers and illustrators were pushed creatively in ways they had not been before.[131] Walter Crane and Kate Greenaway were popular British illustrators in the Victorian era, whose work had already drastically changed the

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[126] Mathewson, *Comstock*, 12a.
[127] Ibid., iii.
[128] Paul, *Cottages*, 88.
[129] Dora V. Smith, Norma Phillips, and National Council of Teachers of English, *Fifty Years of Children's Books, 1910-1960: Trends, Backgrounds, Influences* (Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), 6.
[130] John Tebbel, "For Children, with Love and Profit: Two Decades of Book Publishing for Children," in *Stepping Away from Tradition: Children's Books of the Twenties and Thirties: Papers from a Symposium*, ed. Sybille A. Jagusch et al., (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1988), 18.
[131] Sybille A. Jagusch et al., *Stepping Away from Tradition*, 9.

field (fig. 60 and 61). Their work displays intricate line detail and romantic coloring, but the depiction of the objects and characters in space is a bit flat. In comparison, as illustration progressed into the twentieth century, American Maxfield Parrish's work revealed greater saturation in color while French illustrator Edmund Dulac conveyed greater depth (fig. 62 and 63). Literary scholar Richard Dalby suggests that Parrish was one of America's most successful illustrators. He writes, "His poetic designs and fanciful pictures of a dream world always offered his admirers a soothing escape from reality."[132]

Fairy tales had been available in English translations since about the mid-nineteenth century, with the translation of the Brothers Grimm's *German Popular Stories* in 1823 and Hans Christian Andersen's *Wonderful Stories for Children* in 1846.[133] However, they became increasingly popular at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dalby, in his work *The Golden Age of Children's Book Illustration*, notes, "This revival in the appreciation of old fairy tales and children's stories coincided with the threat to traditional cultures posed by the advance of the industrial world."[134] This conservative return to an older time aligns well with the concurrent Arts and Crafts movement and interest in Period Revivals. However, at the same time, producers and consumers were embracing industrialization through changes in production methods, both of houses and children's books. Perhaps this interest in fantasy through the lens of the past was actually a decidedly modern move.

The early twentieth century was also a time in which children were exposed to stories about other countries, especially folk tales. Through the World's Fairs, improved transportation, and World War I, the greater world became more comprehensible to otherwise-isolated Americans. Additionally, as the country recovered after the war, there was a burst of new

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[132] Richard Dalby, *The Golden Age of Children's Book Illustration* (London: O'Mara Books, 1991), 42.
[133] Smith, Phillips, and National Council of Teachers of English, *Fifty Years*, 12.
[134] Dalby, *Golden Age*, 7.

children's books.[135] Educator and scholar Dora Smith attributed this increased production to post-war optimism and a belief in renewed security in the world.[136] Among the recommended books for children published in *The Bookman* in 1920, all but three were "highly imaginative" and either folk or fairy tales.[137] These types of stories satisfied the new sense of optimism by providing the opportunity to dream.

The production method of children's books changed as well. Though Dulac and Rackham were well established by this point, their illustrations were typically inserts added to the books and their work was often only available in expensive gift-book editions of fairy tales.[138] With improvements to printing processes, the drawings could now be included along with the text and their work could be more widely accessible, increasing their exposure.[139] Interestingly, Dalby indicates that Rackham served as direct inspiration for Walt Disney.[140] Indeed, the seven dwarfs' cottage in *Snow White* has much more in common with Rackham's illustrations than the physical structure of Disney Court as has been previously suggested.

Broadly speaking, children's books across Europe and the U.S. became more dynamic, interesting, and full of variety, in content and in execution in this time period.[141] Though some executives were initially concerned about the high cost of color printing, children's books had never been more popular and publishers were pleased with their profits.[142] Children's book consumption, likely driven by the elite classes, helped expand the field. Consequently, this

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[135] Smith, Phillips, and National Council of Teachers of English, *Fifty Years*, 16.
[136] Ibid., 32.
[137] Ibid., 29
[138] Perry Nodelman, *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 76.
[139] Smith, Phillips, and National Council of Teachers of English, *Fifty Years*, 33.
[140] Dalby, *Golden Age*, 73.
[141] Sybille A. Jagusch et al., *Stepping Away from Tradition*, 10.
[142] Tebbel, "For Children," in *Stepping Away from Tradition*, ed. Sybille A. Jagusch et al., 21.

period of great originality deeply impacted children's literature and set a standard for succeeding artists.[143]

Depictions of architecture were not traditionally included in picture books, with the exception of fantasies and fairy tales. Rackham, Dulac, and also Kay Nielsen, were renowned for their richly detailed depictions of the built environment in addition to their fantastical creatures. These three illustrators in particular differed from their colleagues because they privileged objects and settings over action and characters.[144] They produced illustrations for the great books of the time, including the works of the aforementioned Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. They quickly became some of the greatest and most popular illustrators.[145] Arthur Rackham was "dubbed the 'Beloved Enchanter'" and Dalby named him "arguably the most successful and enduring artist in the Golden Age of children's book illustration."[146] Dulac was a close second, whom Dalby calls "master of the fantastic and exotic, and a 'dreamer of extraordinary dreams.'"[147]

One of the most striking images is an illustration by Nielsen for the Brothers Grimm's 1924 edition of *Hansel and Gretel and Other Stories* (fig. 64). The setting is a forest comprised of gnarled olive green trees that part to reveal a more verdant setting for a brightly colored gingerbread-esque house. It is a simple design with one door and one window on the façade, a steep roofline, and a quaint chimney on the top. Again, the color, scale, and detail evoke the same flight of fancy as the Comstock cottages, though Nielsen has not been directly connected to Comstock. Moreover, the approach to the cottage in this illustration also recalls the sequence of the first view of the dwarfs' cottage in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (fig. 37).

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[143] Smith, Phillips, and National Council of Teachers of English, *Fifty Years*, 36.
[144] Nodelman, *Words about Pictures*, 170.
[145] Dalby, *Golden Age*, 7-8.
[146] Ibid., 73 and 80.
[147] Ibid., 82.

Therefore, it is noteworthy that the builders in Carmel singled out these artists for inspiration. The illustrators' popularity indicates the widespread availability of their material. Clients were probably also familiar with their work. Additionally, Comstock had never traveled to Europe so these images likely influenced his conception of the continent. Without formal training, these illustrations gave Comstock a precedent to follow and the motivation to create something out of the ordinary. Though the initial constructions may have been experiments, clients quickly fell in love with the designs and demanded more. These fairy tale cottages recalled older time periods and implied a childlike world, offering an escape from reality.

It is not a coincidence that children's books were growing in popularity while this architectural style took California by storm. This point reveals both greater access to this source material and a broader awareness of fairy tale imagery. Even though only two illustrators have been specifically cited in connection with the development of storybook architecture, they represent a wider movement in children's literature in which book producers and consumers embraced artistry as well as fantasy subject matter. Rising profits during this time period suggest a craving for fantasy and escapism, which was then translated into domestic spaces. Within the broader emergence of storybook architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, the fairy tale architecture of Carmel exemplifies the inventiveness of the style, demonstrates many of the key features, and captures the spirit of the time and motivation behind the architecture.

The development of Carmel's whimsical architecture is not as isolated in this trend as one might think given its distance from a major urban environment. As represented by the prevalence of revivals, Carmel was not unique in its high level of nostalgia. However, the choice to move to Carmel was a specific reaction to the instability brought on by the urbanization of

California.[148] Despite these conservative motivations, the town of Carmel provided the perfect setting for a unique collection of storybook structures that is unmatched anywhere else and still dictates the aesthetic of the town today. This is an early example of town branding through architectural style that is similarly seen in the redevelopment of Santa Barbara in the Spanish Colonial Revival mode.

Returning to Wallace Neff in Pasadena for a moment, it is remarkable that Gebhard's assessment of his work draws a connection with Maxfield Parrish in his tendency to "squish his buildings into the ground."[149] For Gebhard, the result immerses the viewer into a fairytale world.[150] In this way, he also circumvents the issue of the connection to children's book illustrations without realizing its potency. Interestingly, his descriptions of Neff's creations align closely with his accounts of the San Francisco medieval dollhouses, though an explicit connection was never drawn. This may just be indicative of his writing style and interest in the topic. Or perhaps this hints at the greater trend, even though he staunchly identifies that the Northern and Southern California trends were different.[151] Though the inspirations were arguably different as well as the aesthetic product, these storybook structures share the same escape into a fantasy world in their full participation in the modernization of entertainment, in both film and children's books.

In Berkeley, just as in Carmel, the intellectual elite readily embraced storybook homes. In fact, William R. Yelland's Thornburg Village (now called Normandy Village) from 1926 to 1928 was commissioned by Captain Jack W. Thornburg for Berkeley faculty (fig. 65 and 66). Similar to Wallace Neff and F. Pierpont Davis, Yelland was impressed by the rural architecture

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[148] Starr, *California Dream,* 286.
[149] David Gebhard, introduction to *Wallace Neff, Architect of California's Golden Age*, Clark and Neff, 12.
[150] Ibid., 12.
[151] See Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses,* 114.

of the Auvergne region in France. He wrote, "Everywhere there is a strange atmosphere of simplicity and contentment. I am inclined to feel that, partly anyway, the happy, informal way of building has affected their lives."[152] Thus, in alignment with the Arts and Crafts movement, whether intentionally or not, he held a particular vision for the community who would live in this complex. At Thornburg Village, he aimed to encourage artistic and community values, following late-nineteenth-century European planning ideas.[153] In a way, he was replicating the medieval academic cloister. Lauren Weiss Bricker describes the units as "dark, womblike spaces" with "quiet nooks appropriate to the contemplative needs of the reclusive scholar."[154] Though information about the occupants is difficult to find, it is easy to see how the location near Berkeley's campus would have been appealing.

The initial eight units boast turret-like elements, crooked rooflines covered with rough shingles, and a prominent archway that leads from the sidewalk to the interior courtyard and rear units (fig. 67). Walls combine brick and stucco, the latter of which is faced with curvy half-timbering. Stairways create arches over apartment doors. All of the stucco walls are detailed to suggest great texture and age. Yelland's drawing collection at the University of California at Berkeley includes proposed future additions but his only implemented design was the first building at 1835-49 Spruce Street.[155] Thornburg himself actually continued the theme, building seven additional buildings from 1927 to 1928. Four more buildings would be added in 1941 and 1950, as evident in the plan generated by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (fig. 66).

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[152] Ibid., 110.
[153] Robert Winter, ed., *Toward a Simpler Way of Life: The Arts & Crafts Architects of California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 100.
[154] Ibid., 101.
[155] Daniella Thompson, "Thornburg Village (Normandy Village)," *Berkeley Heritage*, 2009. http://berkeleyheritage.com/berkeley_landmarks/thornburg.html.

There is a stage-set quality to the composition that emphasizes its artifice on the Berkeley streetscape.[156] Walking through Thornburg Village truly feels like an escape from reality, particularly the alleyway that evokes a rural French townscape and recalls the image from Cram's *Farm Houses* book (fig. 8 and 67h). Interestingly, Bricker also suggests that Yelland's "buildings awaken childhood memories of medieval cottages and villages described in fairy tales" though an intentional connection has not been confirmed.[157] Yelland continued this aesthetic in several of his other house designs of the 1920s, including the Herbert Erskine house in Piedmont in 1925-26 and the sprawling Harry E. Miller, Jr. house in Atherton in 1929, which exhibits a similar massing and design to the aforementioned William Goetz House by Neff (fig. 68 and 32).

Sidney and Noble Newsom were equally enamored with the French as evident in their 1924 house design for Fritz Henshaw, inspired by Marie Antoinette's *hameau* (fig. 69). Here, we see prominent rolled eaves as well as a turret-shaped entrance, tinted stucco to suggest age, and half-timbering. The chimneystack, with its scattered masonry elements, seems to sprout organically from the roof. The leaded glass with diamond-shaped panes further contributes to the medieval suggestion. This is not the only home to recall the infamous *hameau*. Walter Ratcliff completed the Linden F. Naylor House in 1927 with more pronounced stonework on the chimneystack and framing the doorway (fig. 70). Similar to the homes designed by Wallace Neff, the L-shaped plans of both houses create natural courtyard spaces that contribute to a stage-set effect.

A final word must be said about Carr Jones, whose brick, well-crafted houses often featured turrets, arched doorways, spiral staircases, and swooping rooflines, akin to the greater

[156] Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses,* 16.
[157] Winter, ed., *Toward a Simpler Way*, 93.

aesthetic trend (fig. 71 and 72).[158] According to friends, his sources included *National Geographic* and *Architectural Digest*, since he never traveled outside of California.[159] He completed an unknown number of works — at least 27 buildings — throughout the Bay Area. The house forms echo that of the Newsoms but Jones uses brick almost exclusively and his roofs are tiled instead of shingled. However, the rounded doorways and turrets still evoke storybook theatricality like the best examples. He was particularly fond of handcraftsmanship, often building much of his work himself. Though Gebhard does not explain his reasoning for terming Jones' work "Cinderella style," it likely derives from the large turret rooms present in many of his designs.[160]

As the preceding examples demonstrate, this medieval vocabulary was both appealing and popular among Bay Area academicians and beyond. Gebhard suggests that men more than women were interested in these "medieval dollhouses" though there is insufficient evidence to support this claim.[161] Enticing aspects include the scale, siting, and material, combining to produce a nonurban composition.[162] In this period of revival, it was about mood not archaeology. Gebhard writes, "They are like the witch's cottage of gingerbread and cookies in "Hansel and Gretel" which has been magically but unrealistically set in a dark endless forest."[163] This comment suggests an anachronistic quality to the style and highlights the inventiveness of design, the allusions to a different time, and the fantasy of the aesthetic.

An important aspect of storybook houses is inventiveness and humor. This non-serious attitude is intended in some cases to affirm an escape into the world of the child. The combinations intentionally play with elements in unconventional ways, most particularly evident

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[158] Weinstein and Svendsen, *Signature Architects*, 79.
[159] Ibid., 82.
[160] Gebhard, *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco,* 159.
[161] Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses,* 100.
[162] Winter, ed., *Toward a Simpler Way*, 94.
[163] Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses,* 99.

in the varied placement of turrets. This level of artifice can and should be taken at face value. Moreover, half-timbering in the storybook sense is not structural nor are the rolled eaves to be understood as actual thatch.[164] Materials are manipulated to suggest age or decay. This architecture is decidedly not urban, if not anti-urban. The underlying aim was to invoke memories of the past, for nostalgia, romance, or an escape from reality.

In surveying the storybook architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area, there is the robust collection of Comstock cottages in Carmel indicative of the English cottage trend, strong representation of the French Norman influence through Yelland and the Newsoms, and Carr Jones' work, which is perhaps most similar to Wallace Neff. Many of these architect-designed examples are not small in scale, yet they represent more cohesion across storybook structures since several architects each produced multiple buildings in their respective aesthetic modes. Carmel is certainly remarkable for the direct connection to children's book illustrations, reflecting the simultaneous rise in popularity of children's books and an increased appreciation for the artistry of illustration. Through improved publication processes and wider circulation, there was greater access to this source material and a broader awareness of fairy tale imagery. A craving for fantasy and escapism pervaded life and literature, as much in San Francisco as in Hollywood, resulting in an arguably larger array of storybook architecture in Northern California.

[164] Ibid., 102.

Chapter 4: Storybook Spreads

While the architect-designed examples are noteworthy in their own right, storybook architecture asserted an even stronger hold on California domestic design through the appearance of these features in mass-produced plan books and architectural publications. The popularity of this aesthetic mode is evident in several tracts around San Francisco, which demonstrates that Californians identified strongly with this architectural tradition. The greatest influence was Walter Wilbur Dixon, whose house plans and their imitations can be seen all over the Bay Area.

Dixon was born in San Francisco in 1883 and became well known for his magazine, *The Home Designer and Garden Beautiful*, published from 1922 to 1926 and co-managed by contractor R. C. Hillen. Like his contemporaries, Dixon spent time in Normandy studying rural French architecture.[165] In the mid-1920s, he produced a plan book of house designs, offering a range of house plans from three-room to six-room and three exterior options: Colonial, English, and Spanish.[166] The Colonial and English versions were also available in brick. The University of California-Berkeley library has two editions, one published in 1925 and the other with an unknown publishing date in the 1920s that cost $12.50 at the time of publishing. The details found in the English plans readily reflect the influence of storybook architecture in their combinations of half-timbering, turrets, eyebrow roofs, and crenellation (fig. 73).

It is known that at least two tracts of housing in Oakland used Dixon plans. Hillen developed Normandy Gardens on Picardy Drive from 1925 to 1926 (fig. 74). Though the available plans do not match any of the units exactly, the elements are quite clear. Turrets and crenellated walls are common along the street, as well as curvy half-timbering and birdhouses

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[165] Gellner and Keister, *Storybook Style*, 106.
[166] Walter Wilbur Dixon and Walter Tharp, *Dixon's Book of Plans; Homes of from Three to Six Rooms, Designed in Colonial, English and Spanish Types of Architecture* (Oakland: W.W. Dixon Plan Service, 192?).

underneath gable roofs. All of the selections are English and only one uses brick in the façade. The two sides of the block surround a central island with a large duplex called The Castle and two other single-family homes (fig. 75). Gellner indicates that Hillen was inspired by a medieval Norman village, envisioning The Castle as a manor house surrounded by cottages.[167] The Castle is most peculiar with its skinny turrets on the northwest façade. The streetscape presents an array of pastel colors that contributes to the storybook aesthetic, though these colors may not be original.

R. C. Hillen's former construction superintendent, Ernest W. Urch, developed the 5800 Block of Ross Street using Dixon plans (fig. 76). He called himself the "Builder of Modest Mansions,"[168] and these houses are, generally speaking, larger than the Picardy Drive tract, indicating increased affluence. Scattered masonry and clinker brick are well utilized here, including a quite dilapidated-looking chimneystack at 5745 Ross (fig. 76d). The half-timbering is orthogonal and several houses have cute upper-story windows with wooden shutters. Also noteworthy are the roughcut stones lining doorway openings. There are several jerkinhead gables but only one turret on the whole block. Sadly, freeway construction in the 1960s destroyed a section of the tract; it is unclear how far the tract extended.[169] Gellner suggests that an additional tract in Oakland, nicknamed Holy Row, likely employed Dixon plans due to its similar aesthetic (fig. 77).[170]

There are even more storybook tracts beyond the ones more confidently associated with Dixon. For example, the San Francisco Planning Department has identified several National Register-eligible structures built between 1931 and 1938 in the Sunset Picturesque Period

[167] Gellner and Keister, *Storybook Style*, 106.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid., 106-107.
[170] Ibid., 116.

Revival Tracts Historic District, concentrated in the blocks east of 36th Avenue between Noriega Street and Judah Street, and between Santiago Street and Quintara Street (fig. 78).[171] The scale, display of colors, and castellated features easily recall Dixon's work. There is a similar tract built in the mid- to late 1920s on Miraloma Drive at Juanita Way and on Portola Drive between Rex Avenue and Del Sur Avenue (fig. 79). Though it is unknown if the builders employed Dixon designs, the pervasiveness of storybook architecture is well apparent.

Evidence from Dixon and Hillen's publication *The Home Designer and Garden Beautiful* clearly demonstrates their interest in these storybook structures. The cover of a March issue features a watercolor of the Spadena House (fig. 80).[172] The July 1926 issue describes it as "A New Home with an Aged 'Old World' Appearance," due to the use of crooked lines (fig. 81).[173] Dixon and Hillen also showcased work by Yelland and, unsurprisingly, advertised for themselves.[174] In June 1926, they featured a grayscale rendering of one of the houses in Normandy Gardens under the title, "Quaintness is Secured Thru the Use of a Tower" (fig. 82).[175] According to Dixon and Hillen, this style appeals to those who like the look of old European towns and "makes for a very delightful artistic small home."[176] The themes of nostalgia and charm are clear in the rhetoric. In the September 1926 issue, they featured a page on The Castle (fig. 83). The caption reads, "The Norman type of architecture has that quality which immediately draws all eyes. It is picturesque, as witness the house illustrated. Those turrets and towers arouse one's curiosity. To see them is to become speculative, wondering what stairway

[171] San Francisco Planning Department, "Sunset Picturesque Period Revival Tracts Historic District," July 2013, http://sf-planning.org/ftp/files/Preservation/sunset_survey/picturesqueperiodrevivalhd.pdf.
[172] Gellner and Keister, *Storybook Style*, 14.
[173] Ibid., 15.
[174] Ibid., 111.
[175] Ibid., 110.
[176] Ibid.

would lead up to them and rather anxious to investigate."[177] This statement captures the storybook effect of the architecture.

Storybook architecture also appeared in other popular publications. An ad for *The Home* in a 1923 issue of *Woman's Weekly*, published in Chicago, depicts a modest home with a "thatch roof," surely reflecting the penchant for rolled eaves at the time (fig. 84).[178] Additionally, New York-based *Arts & Decoration* magazine featured a turreted home on the cover of the April 1929 issue that might comfortably fit in with the houses on Ross Street (fig. 85). The rendering also suggests the start of an eyebrow roof, that continues outside the picture plane, and a scale quite similar to the aforementioned examples. This is proof of the popularity traveling across the country by the end of the 1920s. It also speaks to the perpetuation of the appeal through the wide audience it now reached.[179]

Of course, Dixon was not the only one producing house plans at this point. In fact, historical revival motifs were popular in plan books throughout the 1920s.[180] Modernism was one contemporaneous style not commonly seen in plan books because, as Daniel Reiff suggests, it "elicited more interest among architects than among ordinary people."[181] Since the plan books were intended for the masses, they typically featured small- to medium-sized dwellings. However, the use of vernacular and historic sources for these houses reveals a sophisticated level of participation in a greater trend of professionally designed homes.[182] Interestingly, Paul Duchscherer draws a connection to Hollywood by identifying that the more modern house designs of Craftsman or Prairie style were not featured as widely in films as historic revivals,

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[177] Ibid., 112.
[178] Duchscherer and Keister, *The Bungalow*, 25.
[179] Non-California proponents include Roscoe Harold Zook in Chicago and Kenneth Worthen in Minneapolis/St. Paul. See Betty Green, *Zook: A Look at R. Harold Zook's Unique Architecture* and Jeffrey Hess and Paul Larson, *St. Paul's Architecture.*
[180] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 49.
[181] Reiff, *Houses from Books*, 301.
[182] Ibid., 305.

offering this as an explanation for the explosion of historic revivals in the plan books of the 1920s.[183]

Many factors led to the popularity of plan books and styles available. With the rise of the middle class, more people were able to afford home ownership in the early twentieth century. Additionally, just as the increase of published images impacted architects' work, this also improved the quality of the designs featured in the plan books.[184] Plan books or individual house plans were often quite affordable as well. Duchscherer indicates that a complete set of house plans might have cost as little as five to twenty-five dollars.[185]

Home Builders Catalog was the largest and most comprehensive house plan book at the time, produced by the Home Builders Catalog Company of Chicago and New York, with over 600 house plans. In particular, the 1927 edition reflected an employee's recent trip to Europe to study the vernacular architecture of France, Germany, England, Spain and Italy. As a result, this and later editions reveal a greater proliferation of Old World details in accordance with the tastes of the times.[186] The only accessible copy is the 1929 edition. A house plan cost $20 and included "two sets of blueprints; a materials guide; two sets of specifications, and two building contracts."[187] There are 17 plans that bear a strong storybook sentiment, though more subdued examples exist throughout the volume (fig. 86). The Dedham has a "thatch roof," as do a half-dozen other examples, which is "always fascinating."[188] The Elswick features a delightful

[183] Paul Duchscherer and Douglas Keister, *The Bungalow: America's Arts and Crafts Home* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1995), 19.
[184] Reiff, *Houses from Books*, 304.
[185] Duchscherer and Keister, *The Bungalow*, 15.
[186] Reiff, *Houses from Books*, 228.
[187] Ibid., 229.
[188] *Home Builders Catalog* (Chicago: Home Builders Catalog Company, 1929), 467.

mixing of materials and scattered bricks on the entrance façade.[189] The Flanders is brick with sporadic grey masonry and a prominent turret entrance.[190]

Authentic Small Homes of the Twenties includes an entry titled "Elizabethan as Interpreted Today" (fig. 87).[191] The accompanying text praises the design for its "picturesque informality" and irregularity as a result of "steep roofs, sharp gables, large chimneys, and varying combinations of materials." The text highlights the "'homey' quality that is irresistibly appealing" and "Old World charm."[192] All of these details point to features identified in this thesis as storybook. This is but one example from among countless that showcase the pervasiveness of storybook details in their publication to the masses. Gellner indicates that there is a particular poignant example of a medievalized cottage from the 1931 Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog, but this edition is unavailable.[193]

These various publications and house plan books underscore the popularity of storybook elements and their appeal to the masses. Though the language reveals a strong nostalgia, the reality of mass production made these print sources available and construction of these houses possible without an architect. Moreover, these images reflect details from the more expansive, architect-designed examples found in Los Angeles and San Francisco, allowing the fantasy of storybook architecture to be more accessible to a wider, less affluent public.

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[189] Ibid., 460.
[190] Ibid., 640.
[191] Robert T. Jones, *Authentic Small Houses of the Twenties: Illustrations and Floor Plans of 254 Characteristic Homes* (New York: Dover Publications, 1987), 154.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Gellner and Keister, *Storybook Style*, 18.

Conclusion

The preceding chapters have highlighted the successes of individual architects and traced the simultaneous influences of the film industry and children's book illustrations on the development of this storybook architecture. Though seemingly separate, there is some evidence of an intersection between these two worlds. As fate would have it, illustrator Kay Nielsen moved to Los Angeles in 1938 and sometimes worked as a set designer for various movies, including Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.[194] Moreover, film stills from the 1930s suggest some reciprocal influence of storybook architecture in set design. This thesis began with a reference to the 1933 film version of *Alice in Wonderland*. Likewise, MGM's *Babes in Toyland* (or *March of the Wooden Soldiers)*, released in 1934, experiments with similarly fantastical architecture through the structures in Toyland. The characters derive from nursery rhymes, such as Little Bo Peep, the Pied Piper, Mother Goose, and the Three Little Pigs, while houses take the shape of beach balls and teacups. Much of the story takes place in the home Mother Peep, who is the old lady who lives in a shoe that exhibits swooping rooflines (fig. 88). It seems likely that California's 1920s tradition of architectural whimsy influenced these set designs. Thus, the frequent intersections of these key players and their respective fields establish an interactive and self-referential culture of architectural production.

As noted in *Bay Area Houses*, aside from Dixon's inclusions in his own magazine, the work of storybook designers was not widely published in the 1920s.[195] *Architect and Engineer* featured Yelland several times, but for his later work. Joanne Mathewson is responsible for most of the research on Comstock, but not until more recently. For the remaining designers

[194] Dalby, *Golden Age*, 91.
[195] Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses,* 314.

mentioned, it is difficult to find more than a passing reference. This could suggest several possible theories. First of all, their architecture may not have been a noteworthy departure at the time. Or this mode of design became so pervasive that it was not considered unusual. Another possibility, given Gebhard's definition of the Bay Area Tradition as an elite architecture, is that it was not considered high-brow enough to be included. It is remarkable that their names were excluded from discussion given the prevalence of W.W. Dixon's plan books and images in popular magazines at the time, which clearly reflect their influence.

The appeal and charm of the architecture today may be due largely to the romantic descriptions by the few who were and are enamored by it. Gebhard was obviously infatuated with it, calling various examples a "delight," "charming," "lovely," and "terribly quaint."[196] It gets better: he describes a circa 1925 apartment complex in Baldwin Hills as a "medieval fairytale world of Hansel and Gretel cottages in a thick witch-infested jungle with pools."[197] As previously mentioned, the Carmel writers are also quite taken with Comstock's work. Certainly, the association of Old World architecture with charm and quaintness is not a late-twentieth century phenomenon. Even books about revival architecture published in the 1920s expressed the appeal of picturesqueness and romance.[198] However, since revivals are no longer as common, it is likely these descriptors that have kept the storybook spirit alive and well such that homeowners are commissioning even more fantastical creations today.

In reviewing the examples included in this narrative, it is obvious that interior details have largely been omitted. This is primarily due to limited access; because these homes are privately owned, it is difficult for scholars and photographers to capture the interiors, save for the annual Carmel House Tour. To continue this study further, access to the interiors could be

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[196] Gebhard and Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles,* 42, 143, 171, 324.
[197] Ibid., 98.
[198] Ovnick, "Mark of Zorro," 62, footnote 6.

useful. Though Comstock was undoubtedly committed to his aesthetic inside and out, the use of Dixon plans may result in storybook exteriors, but ordinary interiors. Of course, many homes have likely been since remodeled. Additionally, the commercial examples included by some historians were interesting and quite unique, making it difficult to include them in this narrative. Moreover, there are numerous standalone examples that could have been included in this thesis as well as other architects who have been connected to the style, though the visual evidence is not as compelling.[199]

That this storybook whimsy was only possible in the 1920s and into the 1930s is clear in the disappearance of architect-designed storybook structures after this period. A further analysis of the pervasiveness of Dixon house plans is needed to confirm, but they likely lost popularity as well. William R. Yelland continued to earn commissions, but his later work is decidedly modern with little evidence of the Auvergne vernacular remaining.[200] Similarly, Hugh Comstock ultimately transitioned to a simpler, more cost-effective construction practice of post-adobe as the Great Depression continued.[201] Coincidentally or not, Arthur Rackham's last work for *The Wind in the Willows* and his death marked the end of the golden age of children's illustration just as World War II was getting underway.[202]

The interwar period in California, with its temperate climate and penchant for fantasy made possible by increased affluence in the 1920s, created an ideal environment in which storybook architecture could thrive. The influence of Hollywood, through the development of the industry and set design, and its constituents as clients and designers of these homes and

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[199] See the works of Henry Higby Gutterson and John Hudson Thomas.
[200] See "A Carmel, California House Unfolds: W.R. Yelland, Architect," *Architect & Engineer* 151, "A Farm House in the Delta Country of the Sacramento River, Clarksburg, Calif.," *Architect & Engineer* 193, "House of Dr. Dexter Richards, Berkeley, Cal.," *Architect (New York)* 8, "Some W.R. Yelland Fireplaces," *Architect & Engineer* 158, and "The Country House," *Architect & Engineer* 175.
[201] David Hanson, "It's a Storybook Come to Life: Carmel's Cottage Romance Owes Itself to the Whimsical Genius of Hugh Comstock, the Most Famous Would-Be Architect Few Have Ever Heard of," *Cottage Living*, February 2008, 98.
[202] Dalby, *Golden Age*, 8.

bungalow courts, is irrefutable. But this was also an exciting time in children's literature and illustrations, which undoubtedly influenced some of these house designs and contributed to the fantasy of the period. The association of key producers and consumers with the rising film industry and improved methods of book production reveals this architecture as evidence of the active participation by producers and consumers in modern industrial trends. Through the belief in the California Dream, its residents transformed historic motifs into modern expressions of their newfound status and identity. The elite in the primarily urban areas of Los Angeles and San Francisco warmly embraced these fanciful creations and increased their desirability for the masses. Thus, storybook architecture is a proud Californian tradition that has left a notable mark on the American domestic architectural tradition.

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Figure 1 | The Duchess' House in Paramount Pictures' *Alice in Wonderland* (1933)

Figure 2 | The Mad Hatter's House in Paramount Pictures' *Alice in Wonderland* (1933)

Figure 3 | Lovell House, Los Angeles, Richard Neutra, 1927-1929

Figure 4 | Mission Inn presentation drawing, Riverside, Arthur Burnett Benton, 1908

Figure 5 | Casa del Herrero, Montecito, George Washington Smith, 1925

Figure 6 | Marble House, Newport, Richard Morris Hunt, 1888-1892

Figure 7 | The Elms, Newport, Horace Trumbauer, 1901

Figure 8 | Houses in Rue Balazé, photograph by Ralph Adams Cram

Figure 9 | Cottage near Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire, England

Figure 10 | Print of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco

Figure 11 | Million Dollar Theatre, Los Angeles, A.C. Martin and William Lee Woollett, 1918

Figure 12 | United Artists Theatre, Los Angeles, C. Howard Crane, 1927

Figure 13 | Mayan Theatre, Los Angeles, Morgan, Walls, and Clements, 1927

Figure 14 | Egyptian Theatre, Los Angeles, Meyer and Holler, 1922

Figure 15 | Chinese Theatre, Los Angeles, Meyer and Holler, 1927

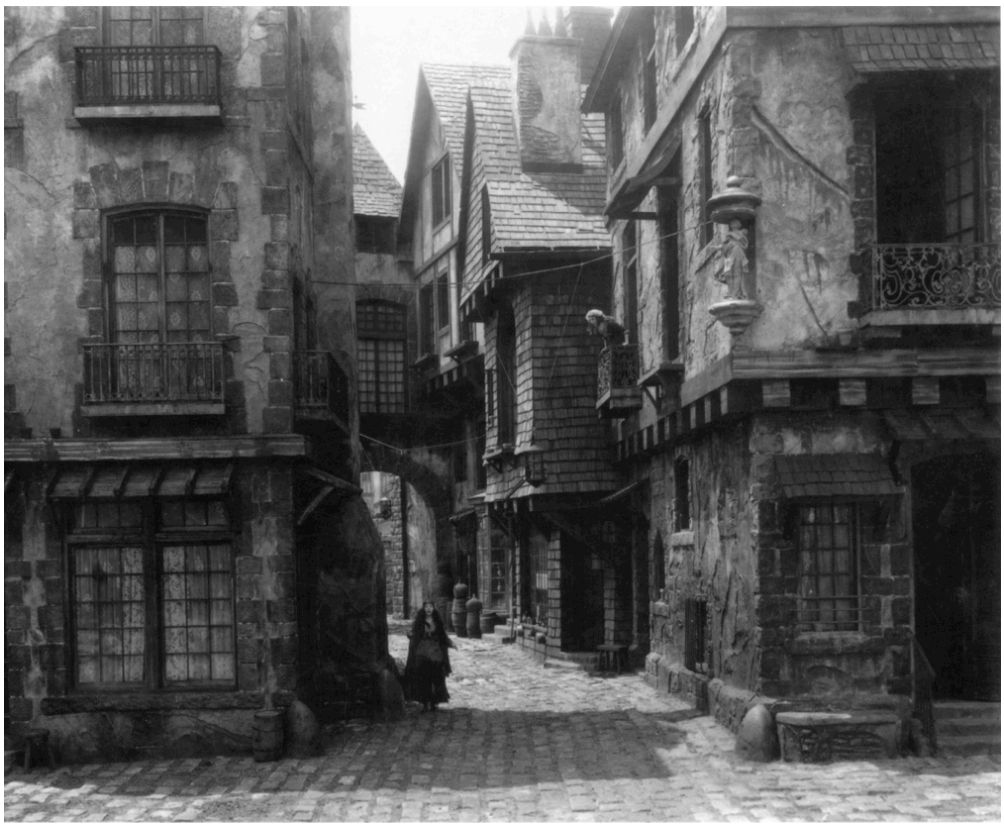


Figure 16 | Set for D. W. Griffith's French Revolution film *Orphans of the Storm*, 1921

Figure 17 | Set for Rex Ingram's World War I film *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1921

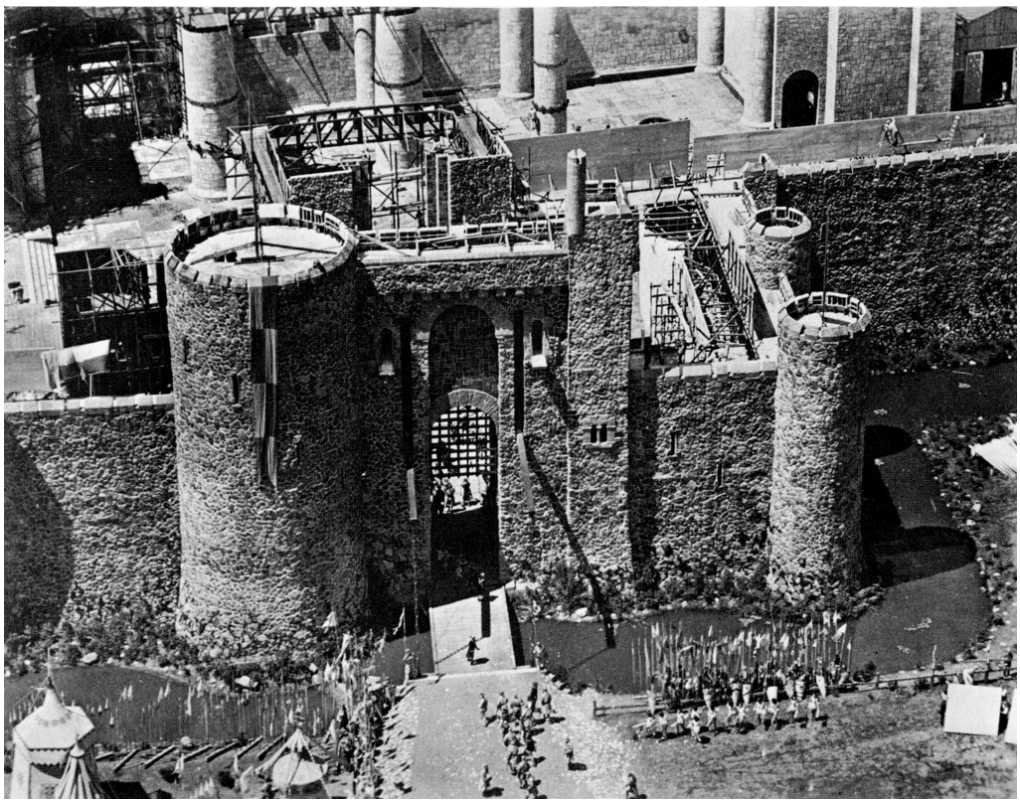


Figure 18 | Set for Douglas Fairbanks' film *Robin Hood*, 1922

Figure 19 | Spadena House, Los Angeles, Harry Oliver, 1921

Figure 20 | Thomas H. Ince Studios, Culver City, 1919

Figure 21 | Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer Studios, Culver City, 1925

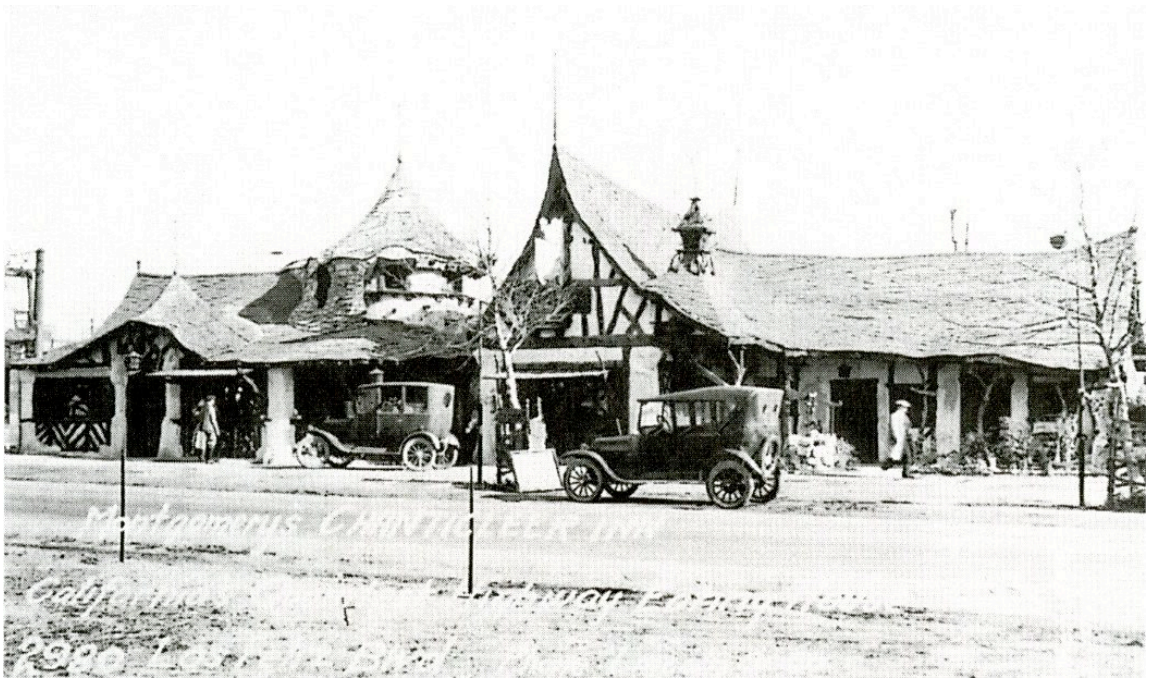


Figure 22 | Tam O'Shanter Restaurant, Los Angeles, Harry Oliver, 1922

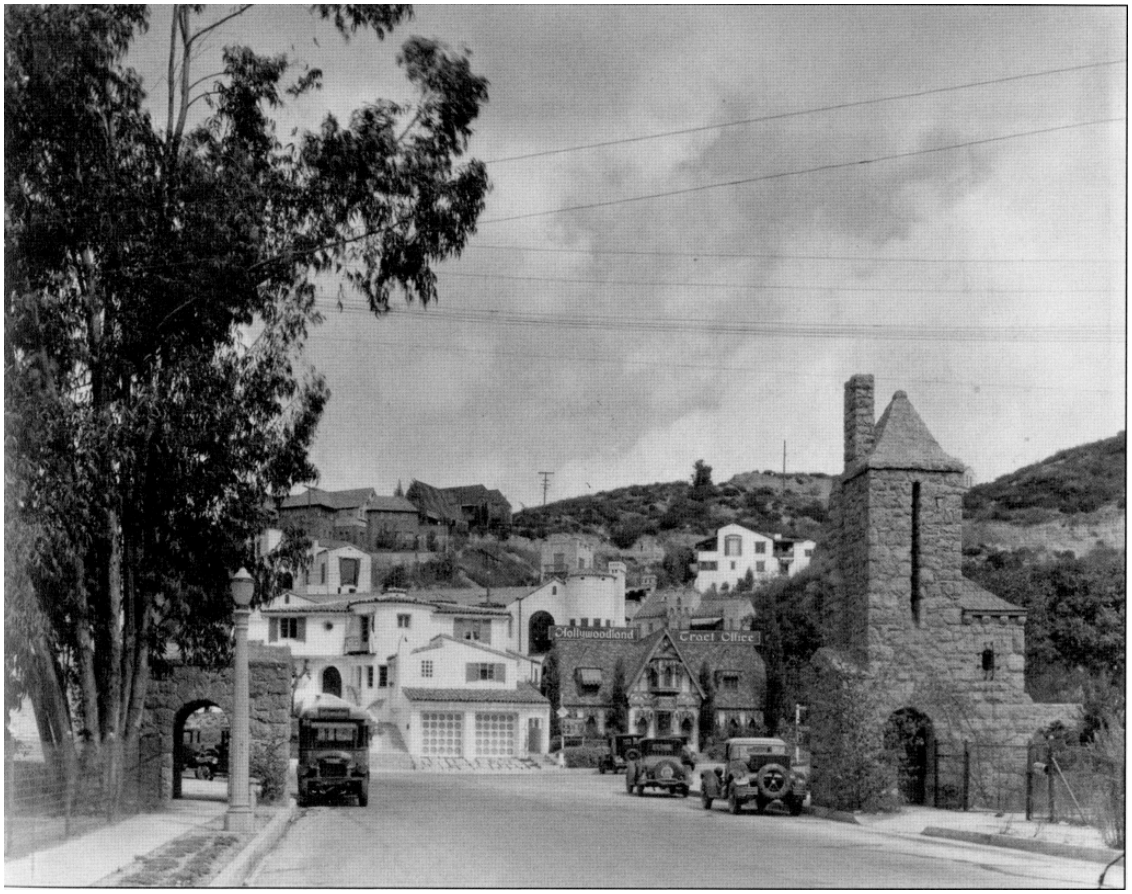


Figure 23 | Hollywoodland entrance – note the Tract Office and other castellated forms

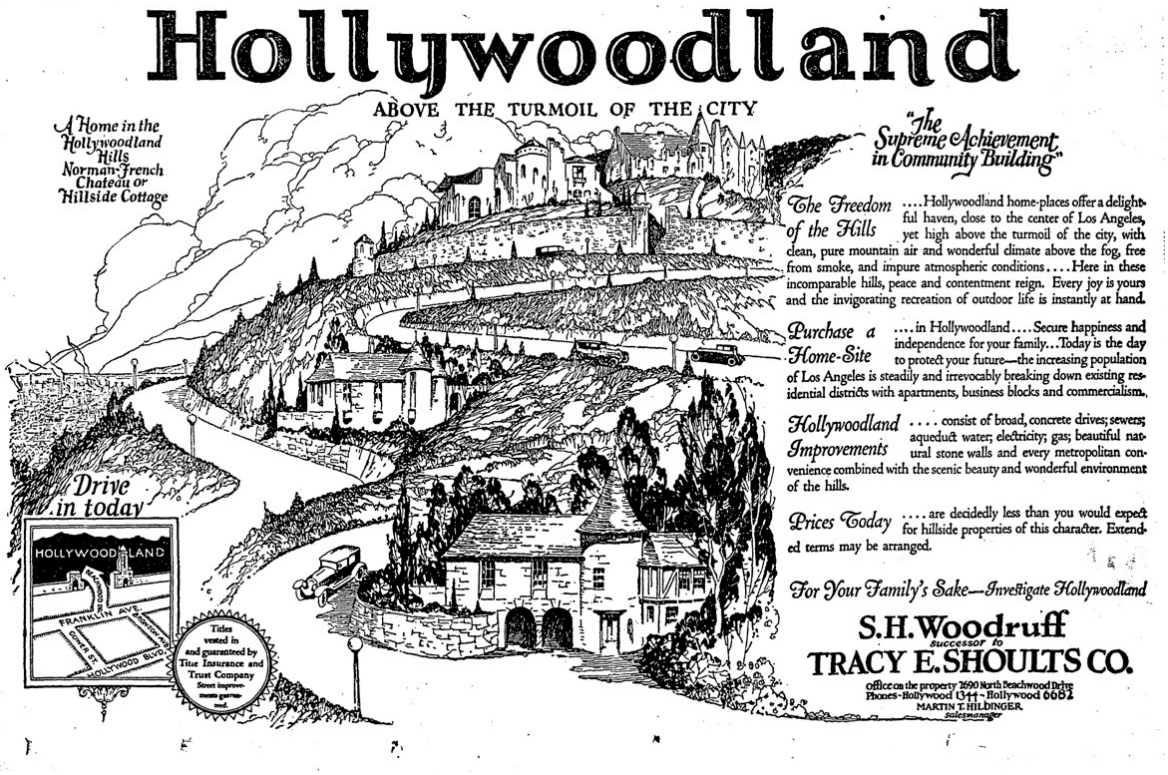


Figure 24 | Advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* – January 20, 1924

Figure 25 | Advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* – February 24, 1924

Figure 26 | Wolf's Lair, Hollywoodland

Figure 27 | Gloria Swanson's house, Hollywoodland

Figure 28 | Humphrey Bogart's house, Hollywoodland

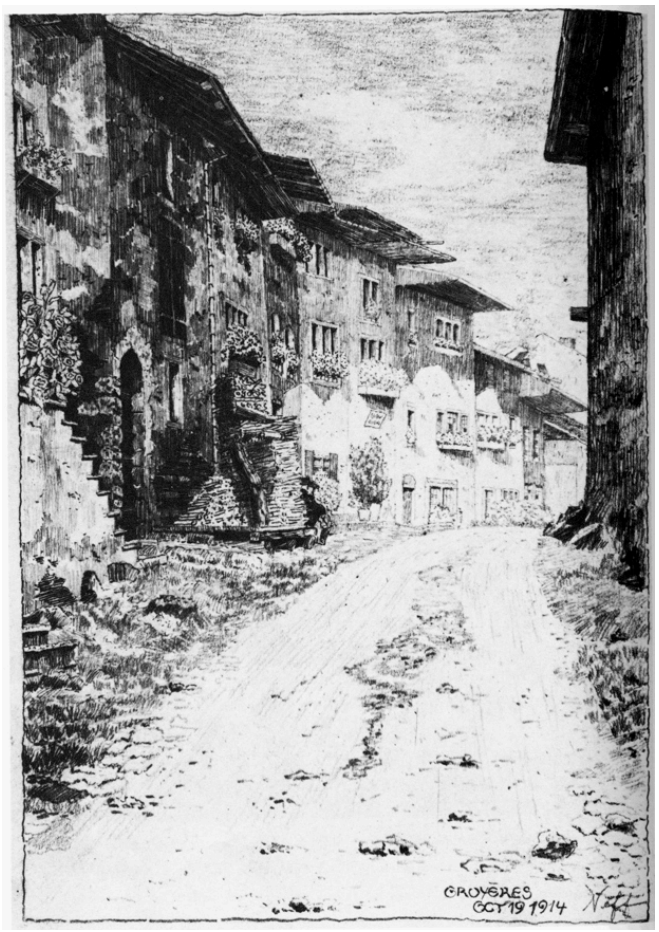


Figure 29 | Sketch by Wallace Neff of a street in Gruyères, France, 1914

Figure 30 | Phillip Schuyler Doane House, San Marino, Wallace Neff, 1924

Figure 31 | Phillip Schuyler Doane House side view, San Marino, Wallace Neff, 1924

Figure 32 | William Goetz House, Bel-Air, Wallace Neff, 1931

Figure 33 | Frederic March House, Los Angeles, Wallace Neff, 1934

Figure 34 | Studio Court entrance, Los Angeles, Einar C. Peterson, 1921

Figure 35 | Studio Court interior, Los Angeles, Einar C. Peterson, 1921

Figure 36 | Disney Court, Los Angeles, Robert Sherwood, 1925

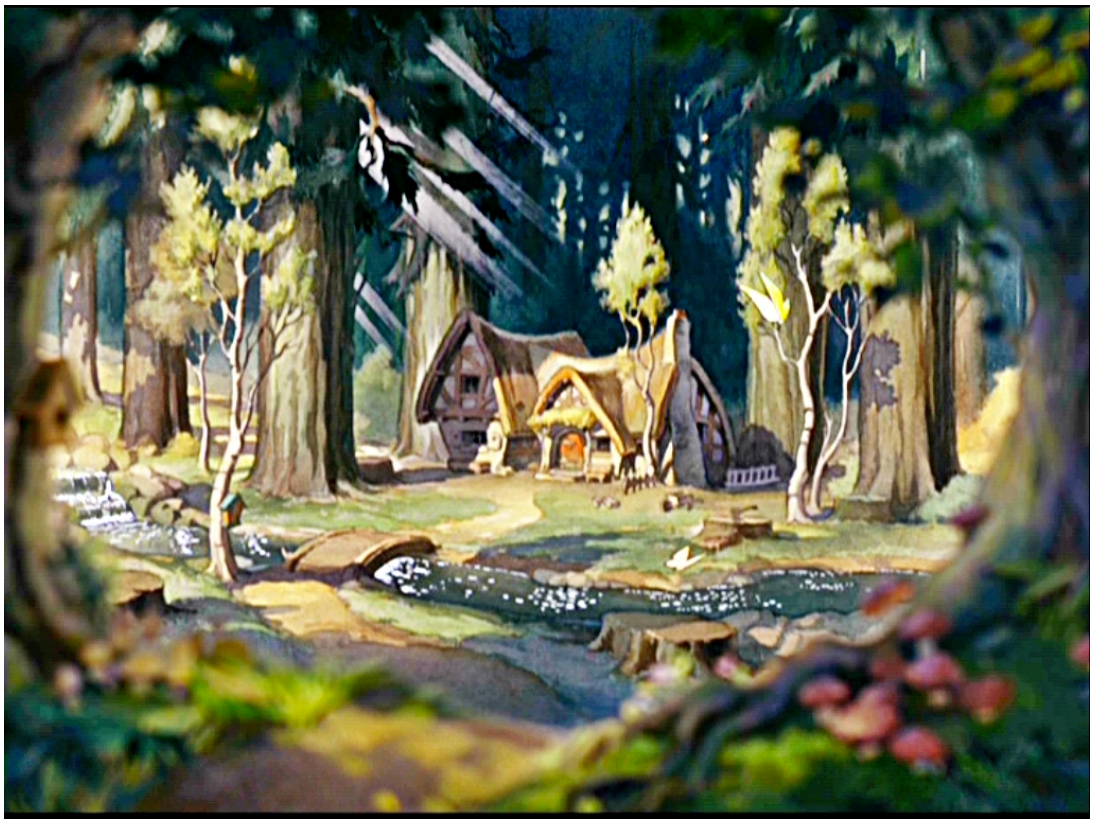


Figure 37 | Still from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

Figure 38 | Walt Disney house, Los Angeles, F. Scott Crowhurst, 1932

Figure 39 | Stonehenge Apartments entrance, Alameda, Christopher Columbus Howard, 1926-29

Figure 40 | Stonehenge Apartments, Alameda, Christopher Columbus Howard, 1926-29

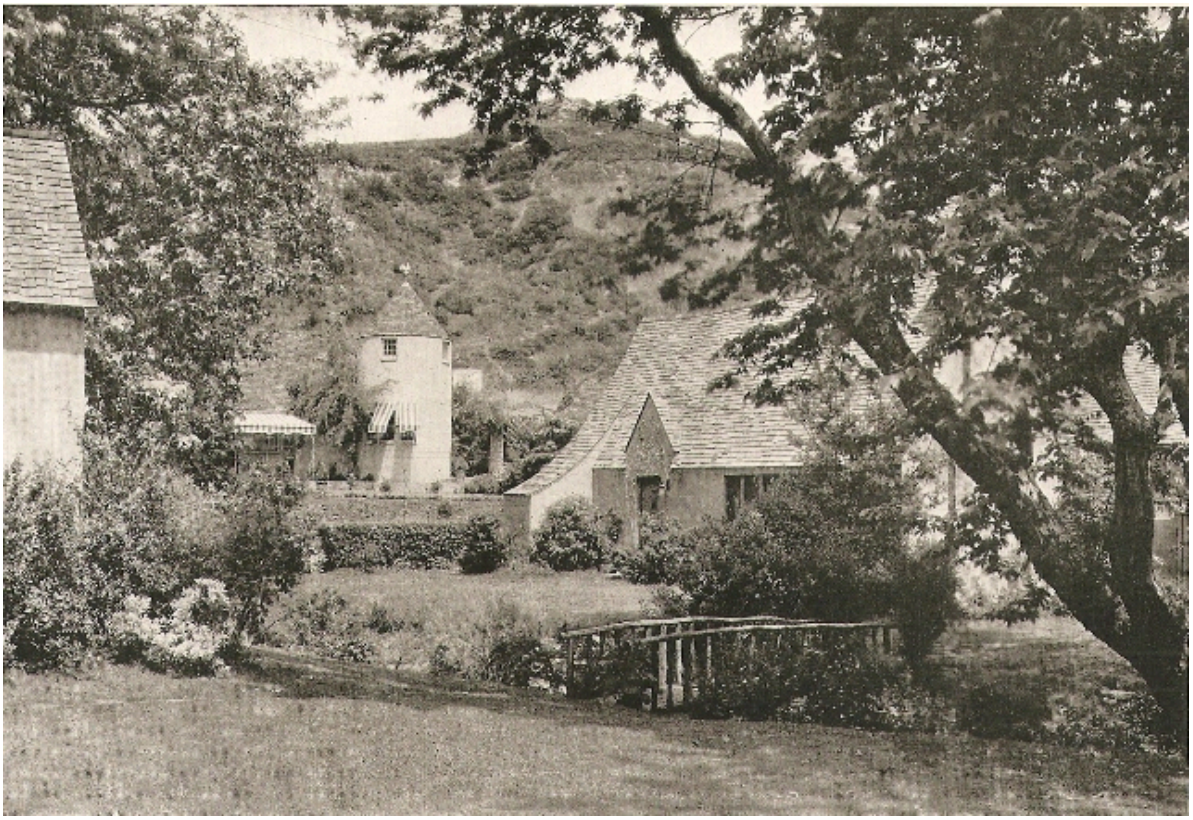


Figure 41 | French Village, Los Angeles, F. Pierpont and Walter S. Davis, 1920

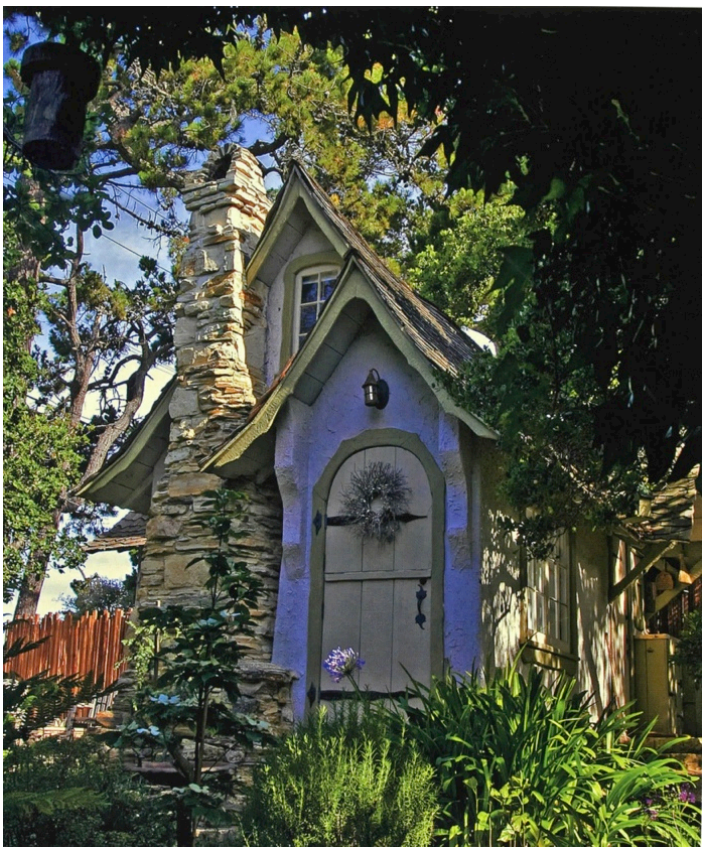


Figure 42 | Doll House (Hansel), Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1924

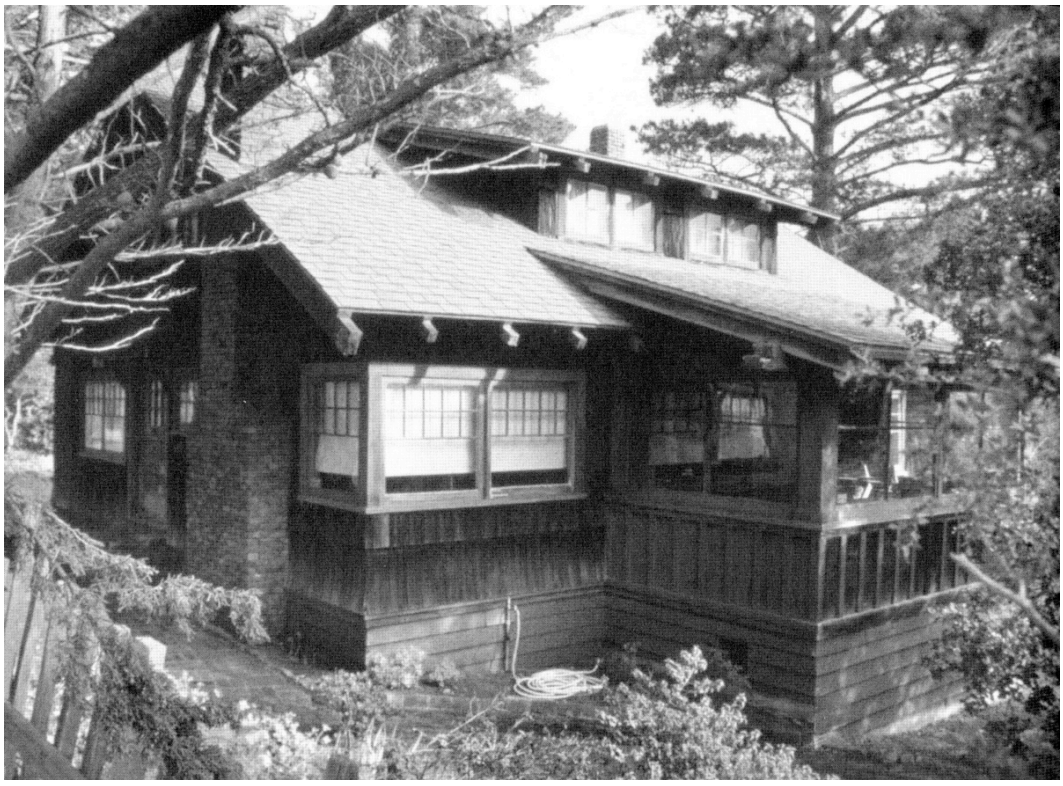


Figure 43 | Example of Arts & Crafts architecture in Carmel by Michael J. Murphy, 1905

Figure 44 | Carmel Weavers Studio, Carmel, Lee Gottfried, 1922

Figure 45 | Carmel Weavers Studio after the addition

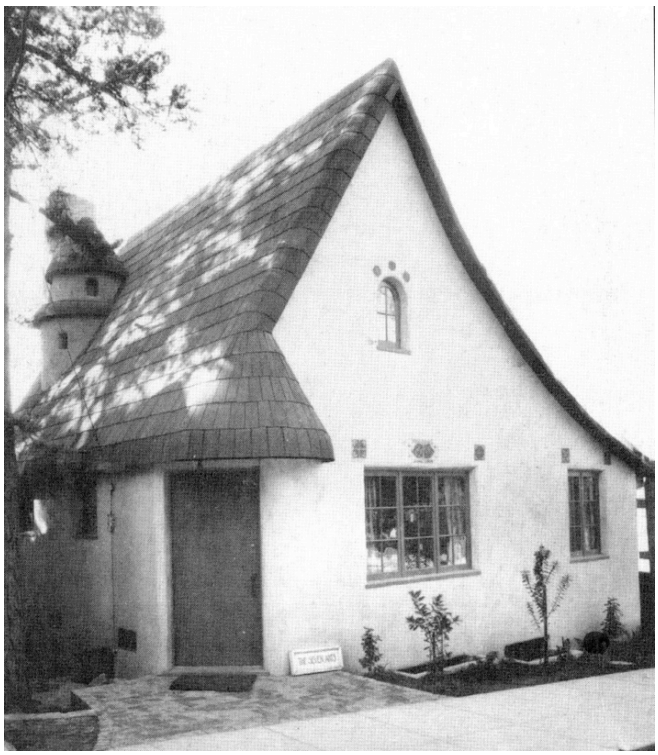


Figure 46 | Seven Arts Shop, Carmel, Michael J. Murphy, 1924

Figure 47 | "Then an old, old woman came out of the house" by Edmund Dulac

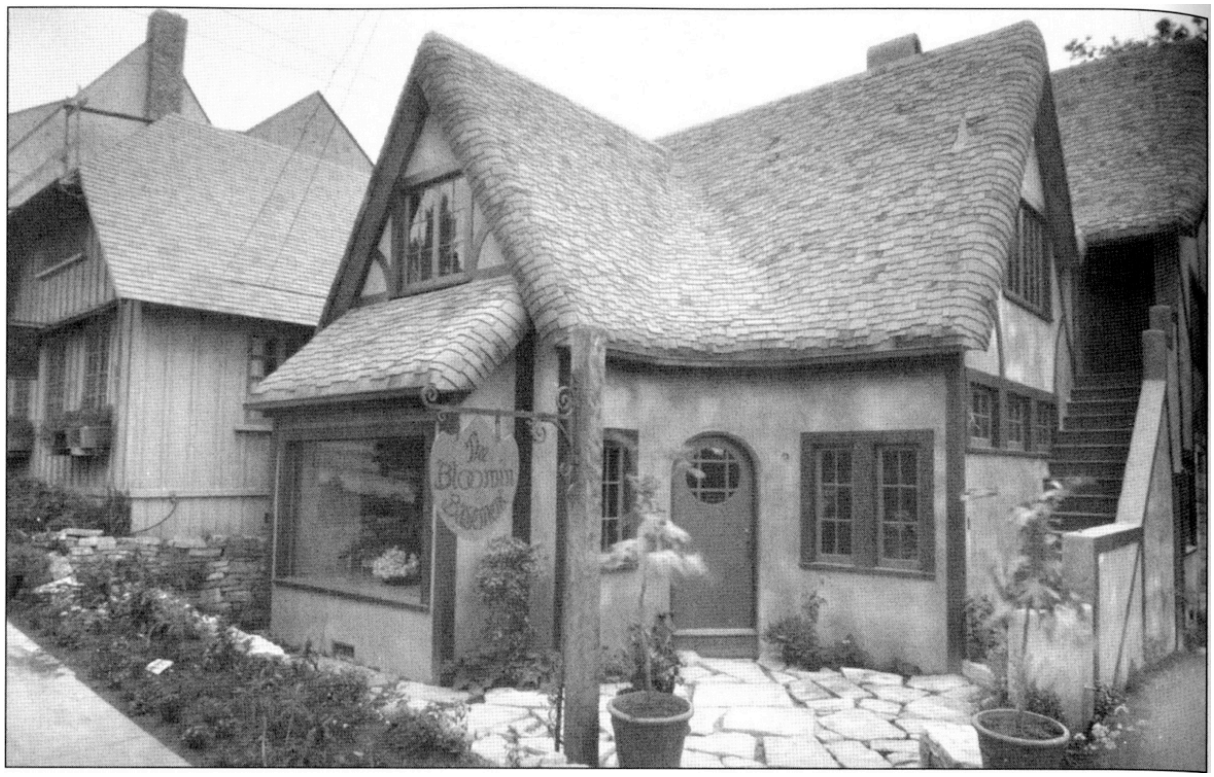


Figure 48 | Bloomin' Basement, Carmel, Lee Gottfried, 1925

Figure 49 | Mayotta (Brown) Comstock and her Otsy-Totsy dolls

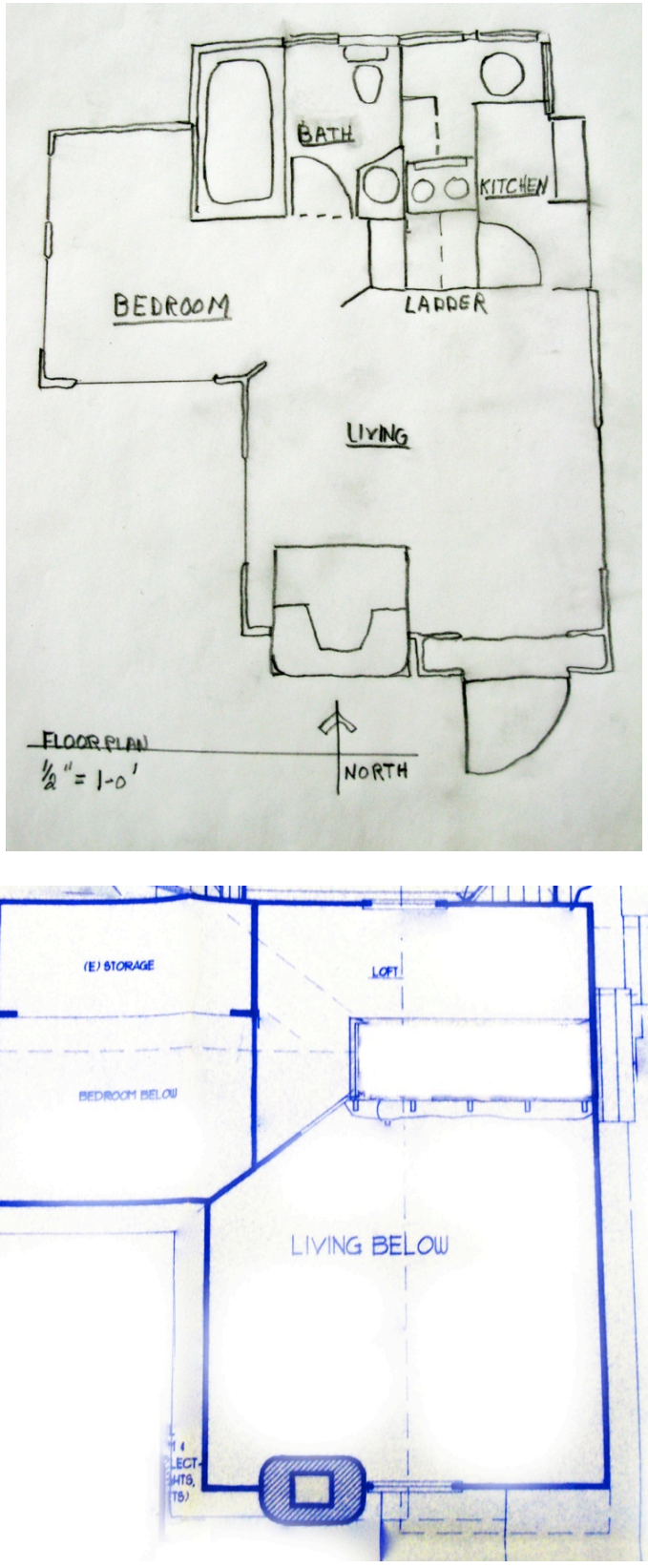


Figure 50 | (Top) First floor plan of Hansel and (Bottom) loft plan

Figure 51 | Comstock Residence/Obers, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1925

Figure 52 | Gretel, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1925

Figure 53 | (Top) Our House, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1928, and (Bottom) Marchen House, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1928

Figure 54 | Illustration by Arthur Rackham in *Little Brother and Little Sister and Other Tales* by the Brothers Grimm, 1917.

Figure 55 | (Top) Sunwiseturn (The Twin on Palou), Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1929, (Bottom) Pink Comstock, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1926

Figure 56 | "Building a House for Maimie" by Arthur Rackham, 1906.

Figure 57 | "Hansel and Gretel" illustration by Arthur Rackham

Figure 58 | The Tuck Box, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1926

Figure 59 | Curtain Call, Carmel, Hugh Comstock, 1929

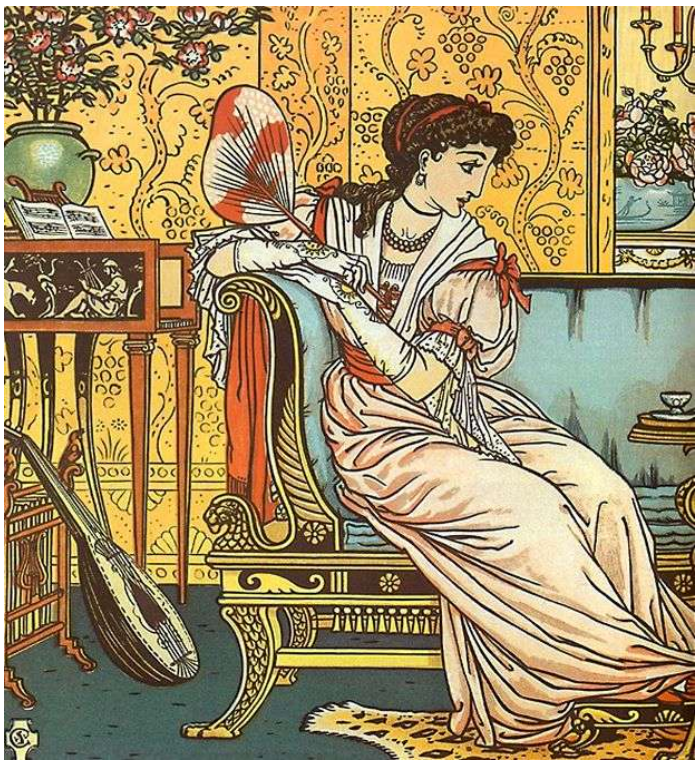


Figure 60 | Illustration by Walter Crane for *Beauty and the Beast*, 1875

Figure 61 | "The Bubble" by Kate Greenaway, 1887

Figure 62 | "The Lantern Bearers" by Maxfield Parrish, 1908, oil on canvas.

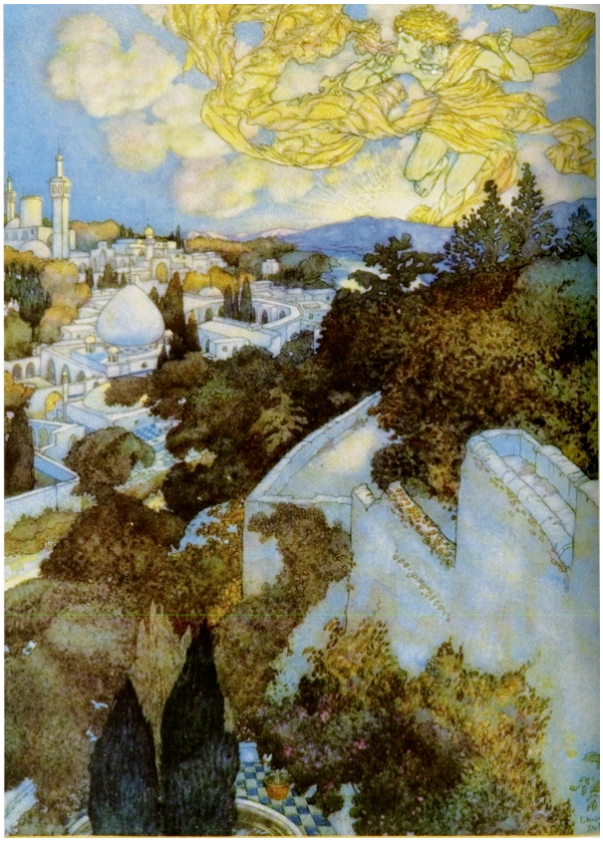


Figure 63 | "Rubaiyat d'Omar Khayyam" by Edmund Dulac, 1909

Figure 64 | Illustration by Kay Nielsen for *Hansel and Gretel and Other Stories* by the Brothers Grimm, 1924

Figure 65 | Elevation drawings by William R. Yelland for Thornburg Village

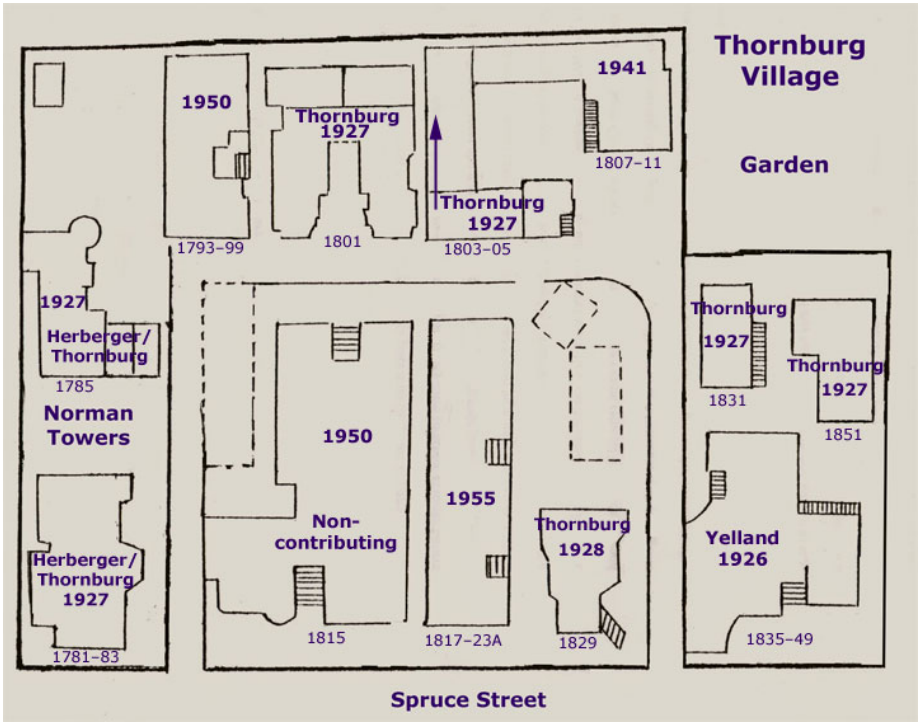


Figure 66 | Site plan of Thornburg Village with additions

(a) Entrance to 1835-1849 Spruce

(b) Entrance to 1829 Spruce

Figure 67 | Thornburg Village (Normandy Village), Berkeley, William R. Yelland, 1926-1928

(c) Archway at 1835-1849 Spruce

(d) Interior courtyard of 1835-1849 Spruce

(e) Roofline of interior courtyard of 1835-1849 Spruce

Figure 67 | continued

(f) 1845-1849 Spruce

(g) 1829 Spruce

Figure 67 | continued

(h) Alleyway along 1793-1805 Spruce

Figure 67 | continued

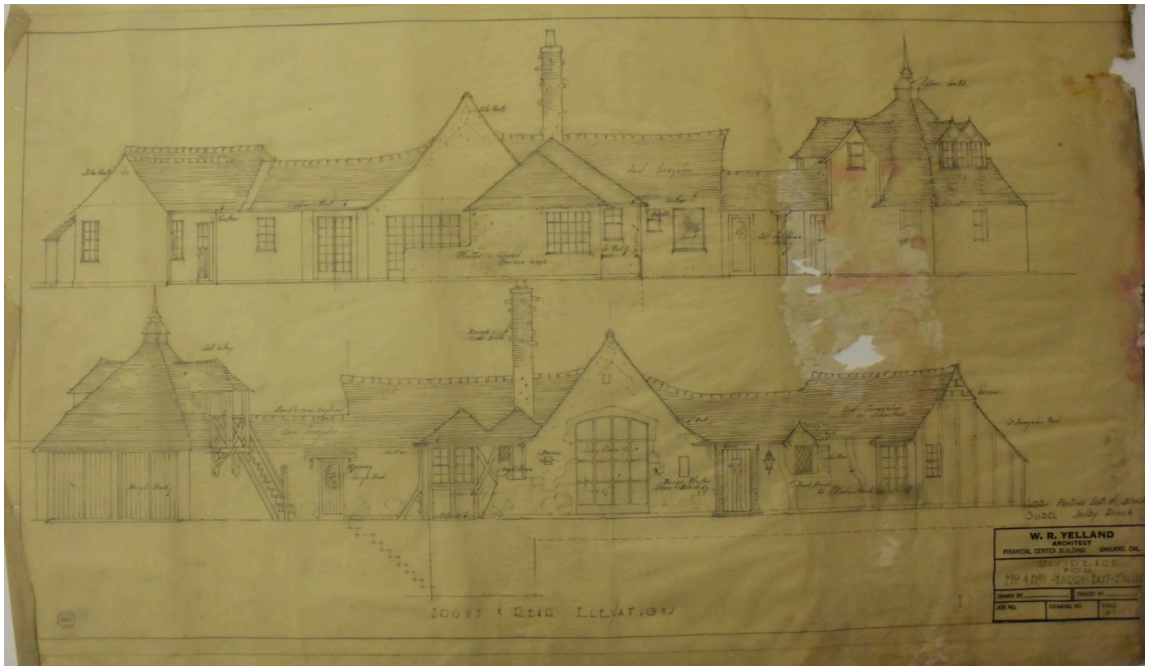


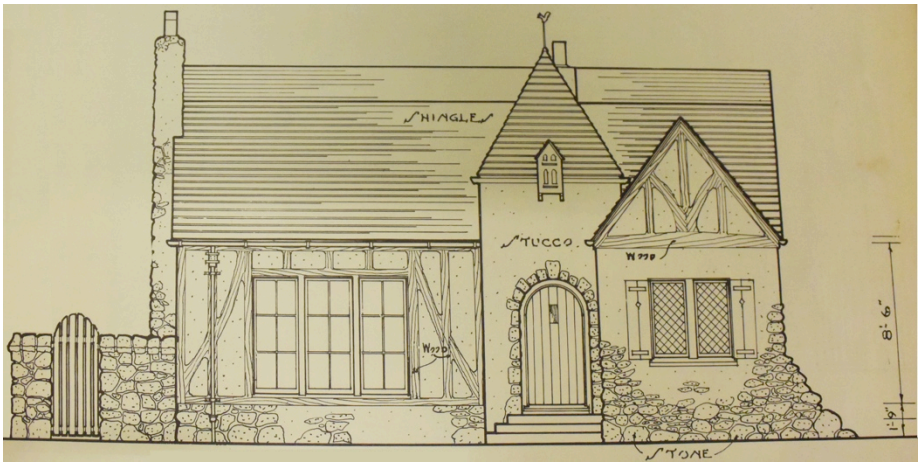
Figure 68 | Elevation drawings of the Harry E. Miller, Jr. House, Atherton, William R. Yelland, 1929

Figure 69 | Fritz Henshaw residence, Piedmont, Sidney and Noble Newsom, 1924

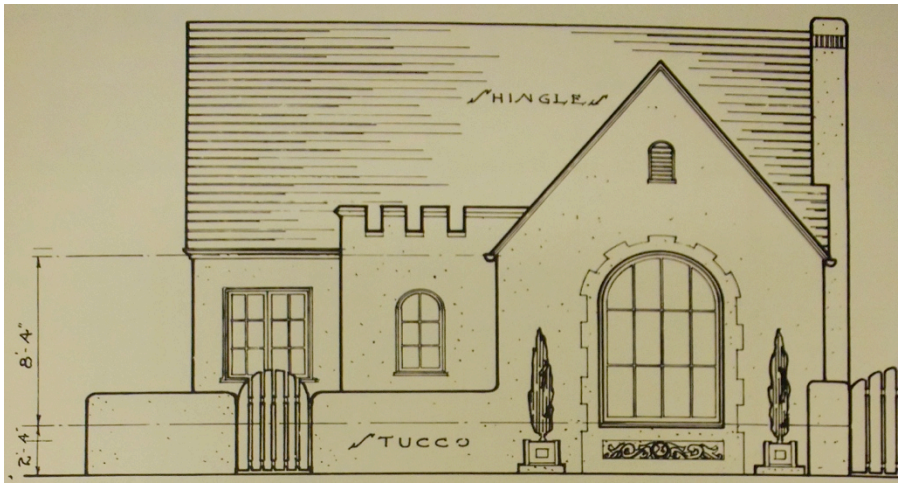
Figure 70 | Linden F. Naylor house, Berkeley, Walter Ratcliff, 1927

Figure 71 | Smith residence, Oakland, Carr Jones, 1929

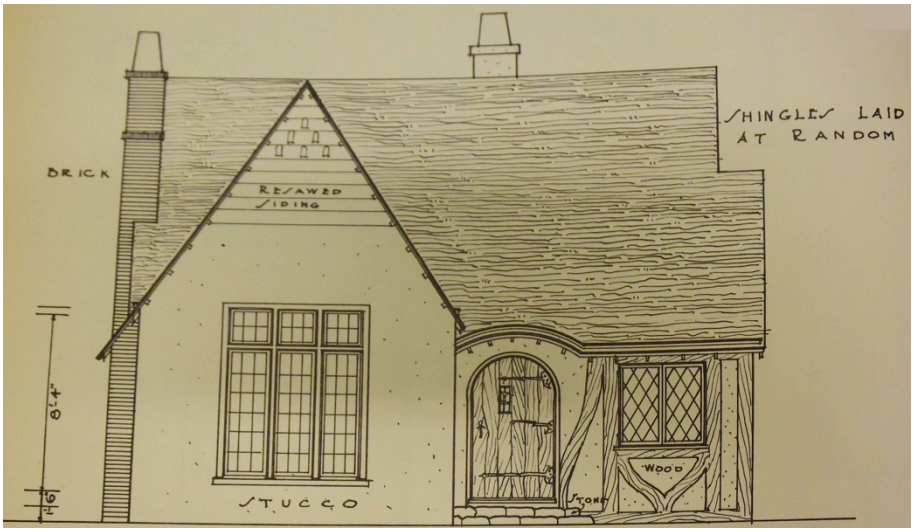
Figure 72 | Hermans residence, Oakland, Carr Jones, 1928



(a) Plan No. 5

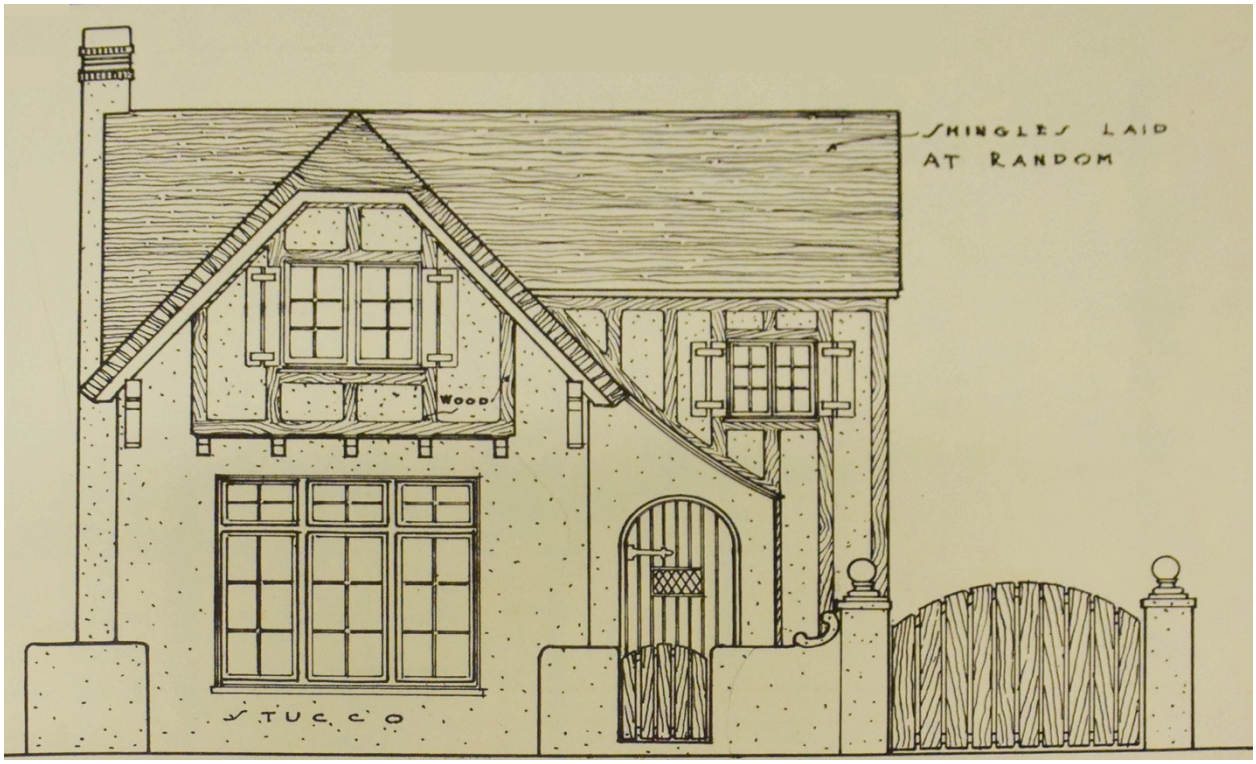


(b) Plan No. 7

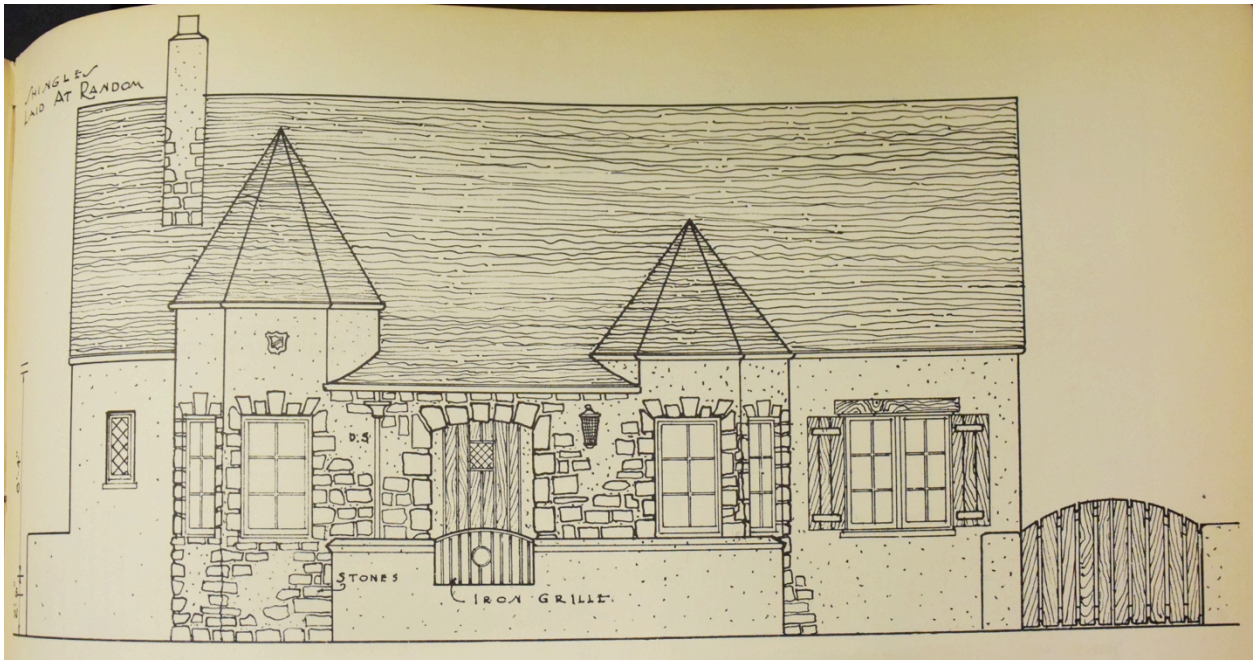


(c) Plan No. 21

Figure 73 | Various English Elevations from *Dixon's Book of Plans*



(d) Plan No. 24



(e) Plan No. 49

Figure 73 | continued

(a) Eastern side of Picardy Drive

(b) Western side of Picardy Drive

Figure 74 | Normandy Gardens (Picardy Drive), Oakland, R. C. Hillen, 1925-26

(c) 5801 and 5739 Picardy Drive

(d) 5722 Picardy Drive

(e) 5856 Picardy Drive

(f) 5738 Picardy Drive

(g) 5822 Picardy Drive

Figure 74 | continued

Figure 75 | The Castle, Normandy Gardens, R.C. Hillen

(a) Eastern side of Ross Street

(b) 5733 Ross Street

(c) 5739 Ross Street

(d) 5745 Ross Street

(e) 5801 Ross Street

Figure 76 | 5800 Block of Ross Street, Oakland, Ernest W. Urch, mid-1920s

(f) 5809 Ross Street

(g) 5817 Ross Street

(h) 5744 Ross Street

(i) 5800 Ross Street

(j) 5824 Ross Street

(k) 5818 Ross Street

Figure 76 | continued

Figure 77 | Holy Row, Oakland - likely based on Dixon plans

Figure 78 | Houses in the Sunset Picturesque Period Revival Tracts Historic District, San Francisco, 1931-1938

Figure 79 | Houses on Miraloma Drive, San Francisco

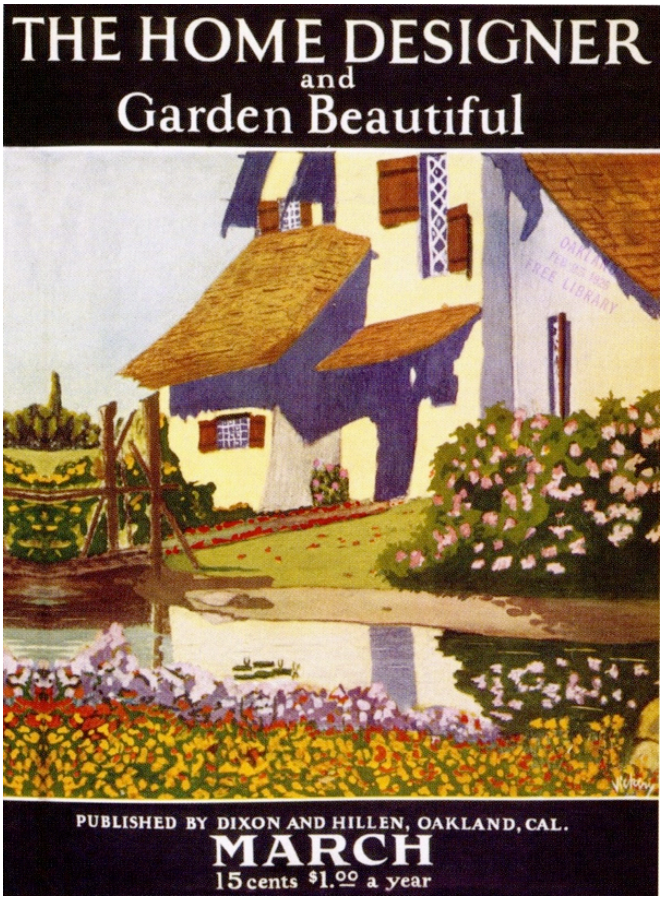


Figure 80 | Cover of *The Home Designer and Garden Beautiful*

Figure 81 | Page from *The Home Designer and Garden Beautiful*

AND GARDEN BEAUTIFUL 45

R. C. HILLEN, BUILDER DESIGNED BY W. W. DIXON

QUAINTNESS IS SECURED THRU THE USE OF A TOWER

The use of "old world architecture" to give a touch of quaintness and charm to our modern American small home has become quite the thing today, and has a strong appeal to all those who love the old towns of Europe. This home with the half-timbered gable adjoining the tower, with its entrance door to the house, together with the multi-colored shingles laid in irregular, crooked courses, and the bright painted shutters along side the windows, contrasting strongly with light, bright colored walls, makes a very delightful artistic small home.

JUNE, 1926

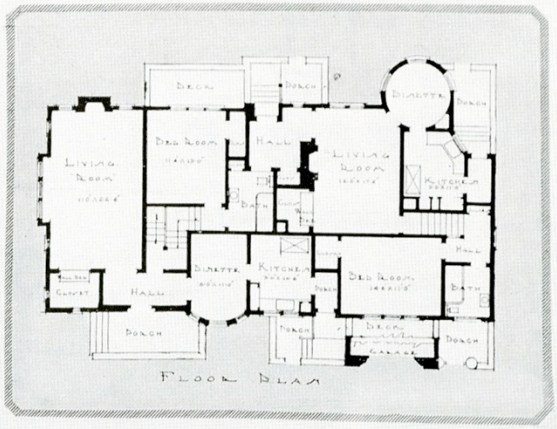
Figure 82 | Page from *The Home Designer and Garden Beautiful*

The Norman type of architecture has that quality which immediately draws all eyes. It is picturesque, as witness the house here illustrated. Those turrets and towers arouse one's curiosity. To see them is to become speculative, wondering what stairway would lead up to them and rather anxious to investigate.

AN UNUSUAL DUPLEX HOUSE

Designed by W. W. Dixon, Oakland, California

R. C. HILLEN, BUILDER



The French-Gothic ceiling with its heavy oak beams decorated in oils, is a main feature of this living room. The walls are of a composition resembling stone and the floor is of the same material in a darker tone.
Note the very convenient arrangement of the rooms and the generous amount of closet space.

Figure 83 | Page from *The Home Designer and Garden Beautiful*

Figure 84 | Ad in a 1923 issue of *Women's Weekly*

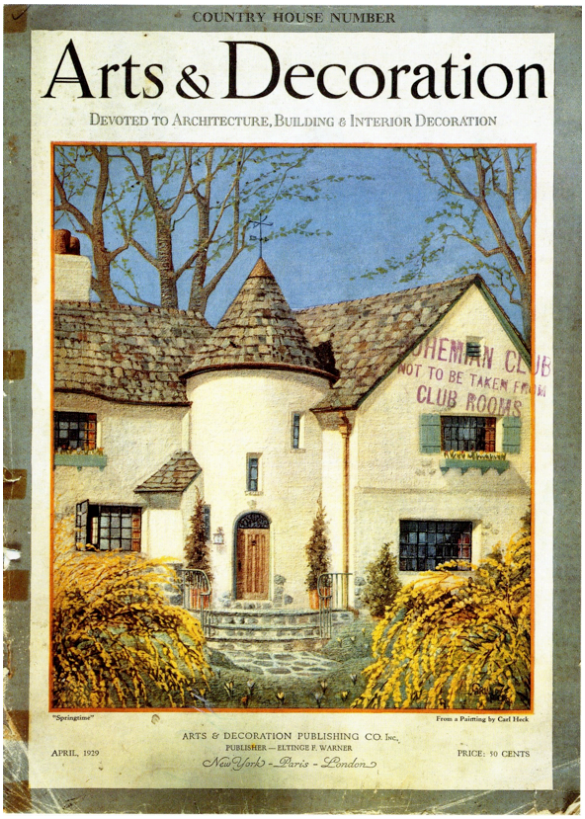
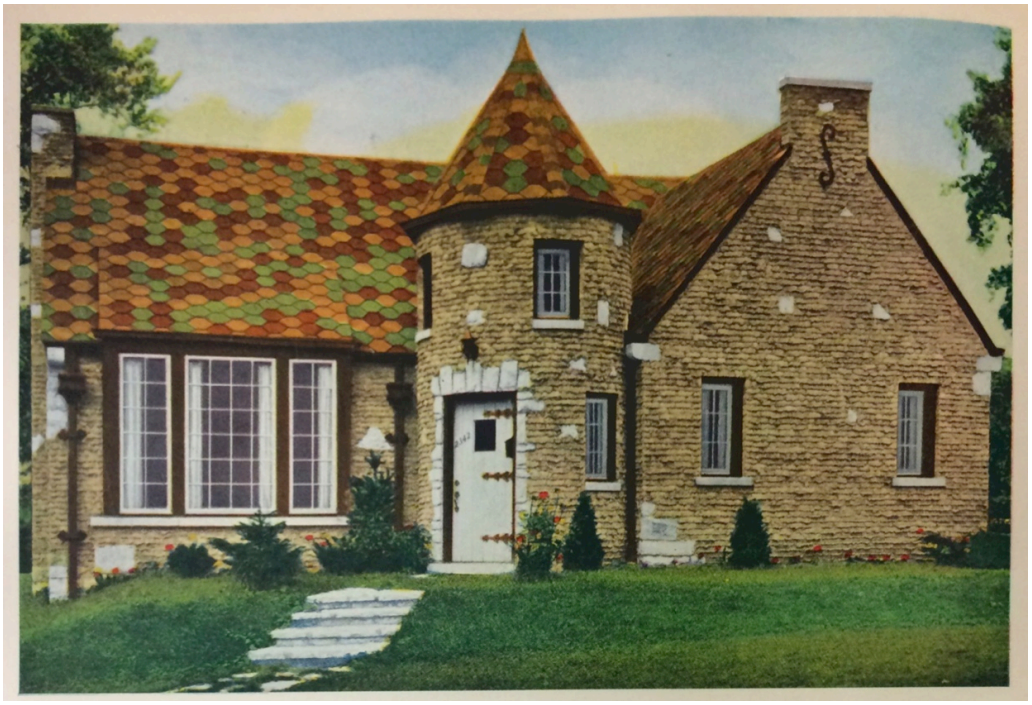


Figure 85 | April 1929 cover of *Arts & Decoration*

(a) The Dedham

(b) The Elswick

Figure 86 | House plans from *Home Builders Catalog*



(c) The Flanders

Figure 86 | continued

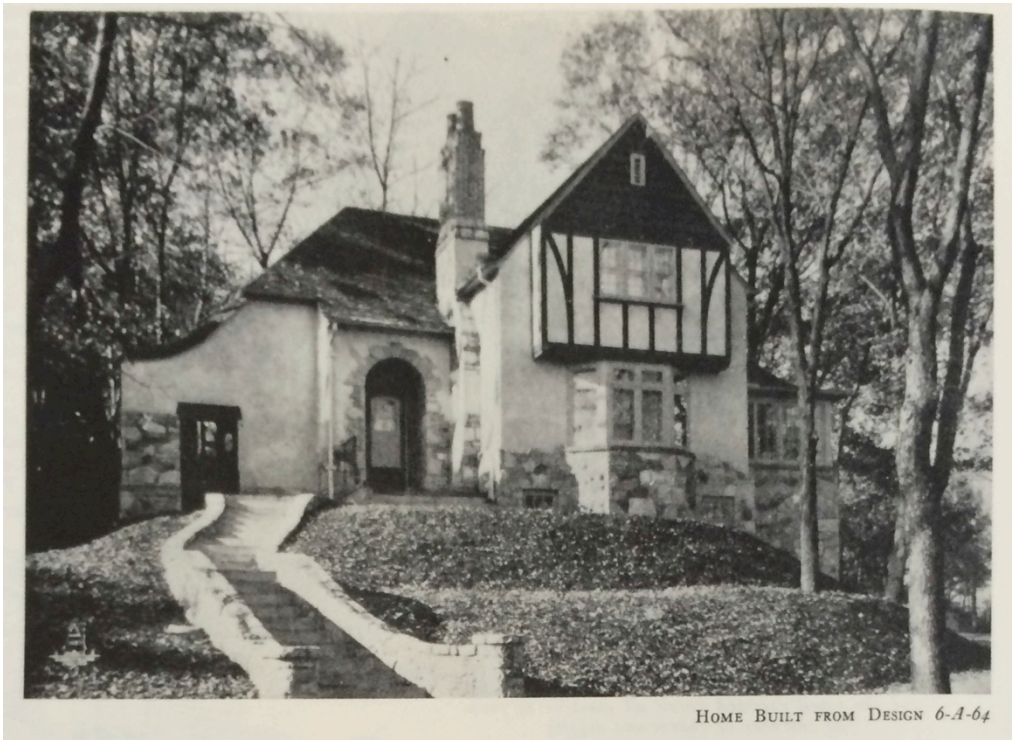


Figure 87 | "Elizabethan as Interpreted Today"

Figure 88 | Scene from MGM's *Babes in Toyland* (1934)

Chronology of Buildings

Author's Note: This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Year	**Building**	**Architect (if known)**	**Client (if known)**	**Address**
1921	Spadena House	Harry Oliver	Irvin V. Willat	516 Walden Dr, Beverly Hills
1921	Studio Court	Einar C. Peterson		4350 Beverly Blvd, Los Angeles
1922	Tam O'Shanter Restaurant	Harry Oliver		2980 Los Feliz Blvd, Los Angeles
1922	Carmel Weavers Studio (now Cottage of Sweets)	Lee Gottfried		Ocean Ave between Monte Verde St and Lincoln St, Carmel
1923	Hollywoodland begins			
1924	Fritz Henshaw house	Sidney and Noble Newsom	Fritz Henshaw	Piedmont
1924	Seven Arts Shop (now Tea Rose Collection)	Michael J. Murphy	Edward Kuster	Ocean Ave between Monte Verde St and Lincoln St, Carmel
1924	Doll House/Hansel	Hugh Comstock	Hugh Comstock	Torres St between 5th and 6th Ave, Carmel
1924	Phillip Schuyler Doane residence	Wallace Neff	Phillip Schuyler Doane	1180 Shenandoah Rd, San Marino
1925	Bloomin' Basement (now Portabella Restaurant	Lee Gottfried	Helen Wilson	Ocean Ave between Monte Verde St and Lincoln St, Carmel
1925	Disney Court	Robert Sherwood		2906-2912 Griffith Park Blvd, Los Angeles
1925	Gretel	Hugh Comstock	Hugh Comstock	Torres St between 5th and 6th Ave, Carmel
1925	Hugh Comstock residence (now Obers)	Hugh Comstock	Hugh Comstock	6th Ave at Torres St, Carmel
1925	Goss house	William R. Yelland	Goss family	Piedmont
1925-26	Herbert Erskine house	William R. Yelland	Herbert Erskine	Piedmont
1925-26	Normandy Gardens (Picardy Drive)	R. C. Hillen		Picardy Dr, Oakland

1926	Comstock Studio	Hugh Comstock	Hugh Comstock	6th Ave at Santa Rita, Carmel
1926	Tupper & Reed Music Store	William R. Yelland		2271 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley
1926	Tuck Box Tea Room	Hugh Comstock		Dolores St between Ocean Ave and 7th Ave, Carmel
1926	Humphrey Bogart house	Evander Hoven	Humphrey Bogart	6310 Rogerton Drive, Hollywoodland
mid-1920s	5800 block of Ross Street	Ernest W. Urch		5800 block of Ross St, Oakland
1926-1928	Thornburg Village (Normandy Village)	William R. Yelland	Captain Jack W. Thornburg	1835-1849 Spruce St, Berkeley
1926-29	Stonehenge Apartments	Christopher Columbus Howard		1545-47 Santa Clara Ave, Alameda
1927	The Woods	Hugh Comstock		Ocean Ave and Torres St, Carmel
1927	Linden F. Naylor house	Walter Ratcliff, Jr.	Linden F. Naylor	2 Somerset Place, Berkeley
1927	Former Engine Co. No. 24	Robert Edwards		6180 Moraga Ave, Oakland
1927-30	Fox Court	Carl Fox		1472-78 University Ave, Berkeley
1928	Our House	Hugh Comstock		Santa Fe St between 5th Ave and 6th Ave, Carmel
1928	Yellow Bird	Hugh Comstock	W. O. Swain	6th Ave between Santa Fe St and Santa Rita St, Carmel
1928	The Birthday House	Hugh Comstock	W. O. Swain	Santa Rita St and 6th Ave, Carmel
1928	Fables	Hugh Comstock	W. O. Swain	Santa Rita St between 6th Ave and Ocean Ave, Carmel
1928	The Doll's House	Hugh Comstock	W. O. Swain	Ocean Ave and Santa Rita St, Carmel
1928	The Tiny Gem	Hugh Comstock	W. O. Swain	Ocean Ave between Santa Rita st and Santa Fe St, Carmel
1928	Marchen Haus	Hugh Comstock		11th Ave at Dolores St, Carmel
1928	Hermans residence	Carr Jones	Hermans family	1600 Fernwood Dr, Oakland

1929	Curtain Call	Hugh Comstock	Constance Ferris	Junipero Ave between 2nd Ave and 3rd Ave, Carmel
1929	Sunwiseturn (The Twin on Palou)	Hugh Comstock	Elsbeth Rose	Casanova St and Palou Ave, Carmel
1929	Gaytonia Apartments	William Gayton		212 Quincy Ave, Long Beach
1929	Harry E. Miller, Jr. house	William R. Yelland	Harry E. Miller	Atherton
1929	Smith residence	Carr Jones	Smith family	15 Humphrey Place, Oakland
1930	Fox/Bertaux Cottage	Carl Fox	Carl Fox	2350 Bowditch St, Berkeley
1930	Ted Montgomery house	Carr Jones	Ted Montgomery	85 Wildwood Gardens, Piedmont
1931	William Goetz house	Wallace Neff	William Goetz	303 St Pierre Rd, Los Angeles
1932	Walt Disney house	F. Scott Crowhurst	Walt Disney	4053 Woking Way, Los Angeles
1933	Oakland Public Library Montclair Branch	C.C. Rosenberry		1687 Mountain Blvd, Oakland
1933	185 Marina Blvd			185 Marina Blvd, San Francisco
1934	Frederic March house	Wallace Neff		1065 Ridgedale Drive, Los Angeles