



Bodega Bay house: Schwartz and Architecture, 2026. Photo Bruce Damonte

Week Two: Gimme Shelter

We look at the most basic human need that architecture addresses: shelter. The contemporary house reveals many competing forces at play: What are appearance expectations? Which new technologies are must-haves? How do we respond to natural forces and climate challenges? How have our ideas about comfort evolved? Where and how do we address access and mobility? Using California as a starting point, the discussion opens outward to a regional and national perspective, and touches briefly on global trends and differences in residential architecture.

Goals

1. Propose some basic concepts for “shelter” and “dwelling”
2. Appreciate the varieties of shelter and the complexities of dwelling
3. Continue to develop vocabulary

Questions

What are our expectations of dwelling – the practice?
What are our expectations of a dwelling – the architecture?
What should we appreciate?

Part 1

A. Shelter and dwelling: first pass

- The primitive hut (Laugier – Enlightenment)
- Dwelling as rootedness, belonging, staying
- Special shelter circumstances, e.g., temp. lodging, disaster relief, mobile

B. California dwelling through time

- Early inhabitants of the Sonoma area: Pomo, Miwok, Wappo (sadly scant evidence)
- Settlement by those of European origin
- The 20th century

Influences: Regional vernaculars, Japan, Europe, modernism, arts & crafts

Responses: war, industry, standardization, scientific living, urbanization

Ideas: McCoy's *Five California Architects*; the Case Study program

Part 2

C. California dwelling in late/post modernism and into the 21st century (so far)

- Experimental materials and technologies
- Reuse, eco-maxxing, alternative place-making
- Policies and parallel universes: how small, how big, how dense?

Vocabulary

Commodity – Firmness – Delight

Program – Context – Form – Material

Dwelling

Vernacular

Quotes

“Modern life demands, and is waiting for, a new kind of plan, both for the house and the city.” LeCorbusier, 1923, *Towards a New Architecture*.

“Madam, do you know what your house weighs?” Attributed to Buckminster Fuller by Reyner Banham, “A home is not a house” in *Art in America* (April 1965).

More websites

City Lab: <https://www.bloomberg.com/citylab>

Planetizen: <https://www.planetizen.com/>

Arts & Architecture <https://artsandarchitecture.com/>

Some readings related to dwelling

McCoy, Esther. (1960). *Five California Architects*. Reinhold Book Corporation.

Reprinted 1987 Hennessy + Ingalls. Early 20th century – a great period in California home architecture that set California on its path to epitomizing modern living (Case Study program). Bernard Maybeck (Berkeley fame), Irving Gill (San Diego and LA), Greene & Greene (Pasadena), R.M. Schindler (mostly LA and environs).

Rudofsky, Bernard. (1964). *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non Pedigreed Architecture*. Museum of Modern Art / Doubleday & Co.