

Technical Committee on Modern Heritage at Play in LA

Los Angeles, the site of the 2009 annual conference, served as a fertile playground for the APT Technical Committee on Modern Heritage (TC-MH), and its members made the most of the opportunity in November.

Before arriving in Los Angeles, TC-MH members helped plan the “Modern Heritage” track, reviewing and recommending abstracts and soliciting additional papers for presentation.

A panel discussion entitled “*Modern Heritage: Progress, Priorities, and Prognosis*” kicked off the modern paper sessions, and Committee members David Fixler, FAIA, and Tom Jester, AIA, Susan MacDonald, and Michael McClelland, all members of the TC-MH, participated. The lively panel discussion, with excellent questions from the audience, was an opportunity to review the significant efforts made over the past twenty years to preserve modern heritage, discuss gaps in the technical knowledge base, and consider emerging trends and new issues. Papers presented in the modern tracks covered topics ranging from curtain walls, glazing systems, and concrete to modern plazas and art. Challenging modern typologies were discussed in papers presented on hospitals, schools, and multi-family housing.

A particular highlight of the conference was a reception organized by the Technical Committee on Modern Heritage for its members and invited guests. Hosted graciously by Kelly Sutherlin McLeod at her firm’s architectural office in Long Beach, the event was an opportunity to socialize and discuss modern heritage in a modern landmark, the 1955 office building designed by one of the Case-study house architects, Edward Killingsworth. Following an absolutely delicious catered dinner and tours of the office building, the reception attendees gathered for a brief informal conversation on modern heritage issues. The TC-MH is exceptionally grateful to Kelly McLeod for making this event so special.

Tours and field sessions also focused on modern heritage. Those participating in the Neutra-Schindler tour were treated to in depth looks at important residences by modern masters, and the tour guides provided fascinating background on Neutra and Schindler’s oeuvres. Many of those who attended of the Palm Springs field session, organized in part by TC-MH co-chair David Fixler, raved about the visit to the desert. Drinks at the Kaufman house with the mountains in the background at dusk was noted as an amazing experience that underscored the beauty of Neutra’s masterpiece.

The TC-MH held a committee meeting during the conference to discuss ongoing activities and new initiatives. Highlights include planning for a special double-issue of the *APT Bulletin* dedicated to modern heritage and a pre-conference training workshop on modern heritage preservation that the TC-MH will be organizing for the 2011 annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia.

Los Angeles proved to be a nearly idyllic venue for attendees with an interest in modern heritage. In addition to conference sessions, receptions, and tours, many attendees found time to visit modern and contemporary landmarks around the hotel, and intrepid attendees even took time to view the *Richard Neutra Architect: Sketches & Drawings* exhibit at the Los Angeles Public Library.

The TC-MH thanks the entire group of conference organizers for their hard work to make APT LA so successful and memorable!