

The concept of the garden room—a hallmark of Thomas Church & Associates and a subject frequently mentioned in popular home and garden magazines—was skillfully manifested here. Halprin’s plan and a photograph of his work were the only illustrations for a *House Beautiful* article titled “The Garden of the Next America Is an Outdoor Room.” The Caygill garden was also featured in *House and Home* later that year.<sup>1</sup>

When the Caygills hired Halprin to design their second garden, he created an “outdoor room” that broke with the dominant horticultural approach to such commissions. *House Beautiful* described it as “furnished with plants, of course, plus stone, wood, concrete, water, texture, and the deliberately planned play of sunlight and shadow.” Individualism and privacy were essential qualities of the garden-as-outdoor-room, in which the designed landscape was exclusively for invited guests. Long, narrow, and roughly rectilinear, with a courtyard-like center, the twenty-five-by-sixty-foot garden was a small but dramatic multilevel geometric composition. As a ground plane, Halprin used a concrete pad scored in a large grid pattern and overlaid with circles and curves. House and garden sat on the flat upper portion of the site, which sloped steeply to a retaining wall and a pool on the north side. A six-and-a-half-foot wood fence screened parking and offered privacy.

In “Notes on the Caygill Garden,” Halprin wrote that a “single dominant design feature seemed imperative to hold the divergent elements together.” His solution was a sinuous brick wall, which served both as seating and as a planter, with a fence behind it that ran “the length of the garden—curving to widen and narrow the shallow space and thus to make it ‘move.’”<sup>2</sup> Opposite the final curve, an angular wooden bench provided additional seating at



View of garden, 1951. Courtesy LHC.

the edge of the slope. A lath structure partially covering the west portion of the garden offered shade and dramatic shadow patterns. The soft curves of the surrounding hills seemed almost part of the private garden.

Within the grid, four perfect circles were placed in a balanced composition, an aesthetic demonstrating the influence of modern artists, particularly the biomorphism of Joan Miró and Jean Arp, whose work had also played a role in the design of the Donnell garden several years earlier.<sup>3</sup> These distinctive forms stood in sharp contrast to the straight lines of fence, bench, lathwork, and grid. Each circle had both a practical and a symbolic purpose. The east



Stepped pathway from house, 2013. Photograph by author.

dance world. In 1957, Merce Cunningham performed on it, and the deck quickly became a pilgrimage site for dancers and choreographers.

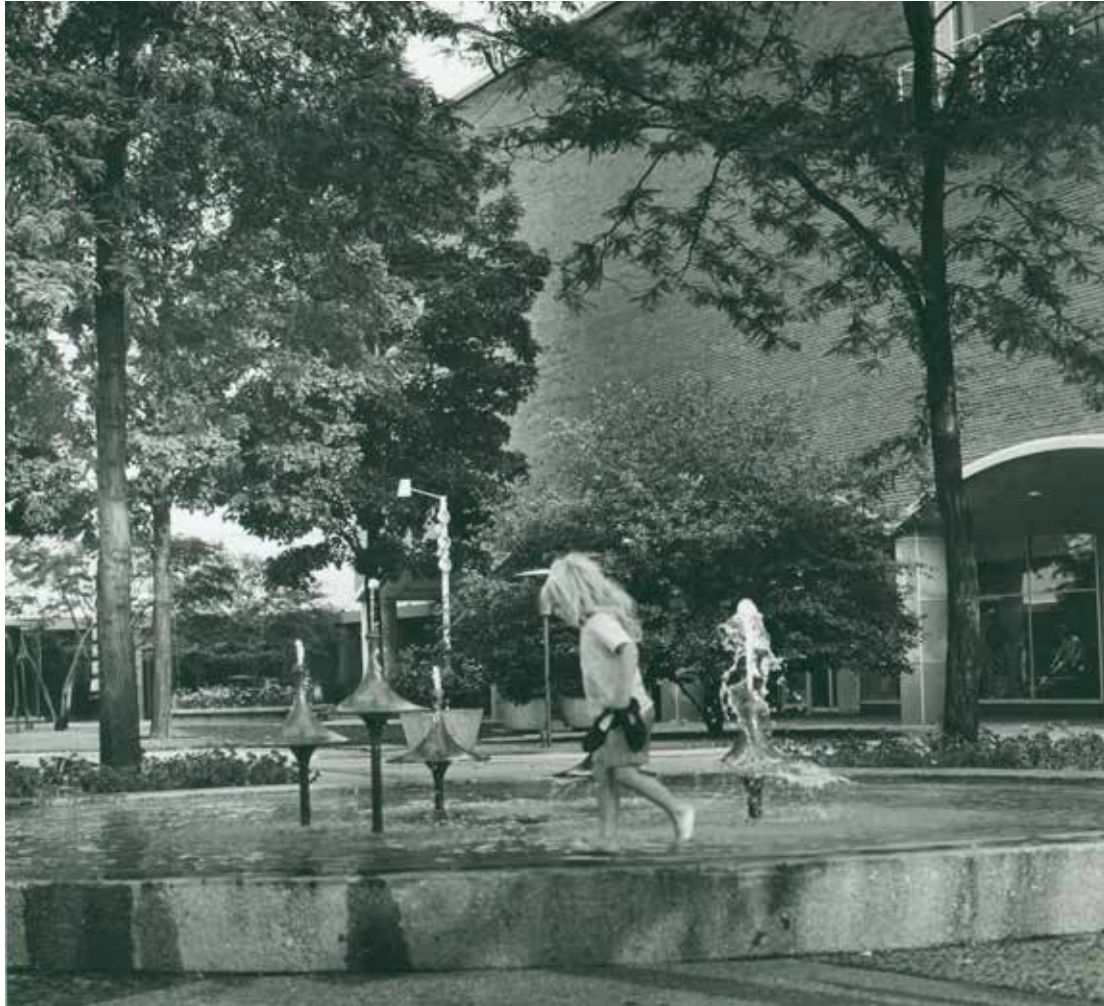
The downhill path from the house to the deck is a curving procession of railroad tie steps. At the foot of the slope, six rows of backless wooden seats are set among boulders and trees; together with the dance deck, they formed a modest tiered amphitheater. A place to watch rehearsals and performances, the seating area could also become a performance space. The center of the deck is one focus of attention, but the edges—both downstage, facing the seating area, and near the railings, close to the forest—are equally critical. The back of the deck stands thirty feet above the slope and offers a view through the columnar trunks of redwoods. The platform appears to be suspended in the air, the dancers hov-



Dancers on the deck, with San Francisco Bay in background. Courtesy LHC.

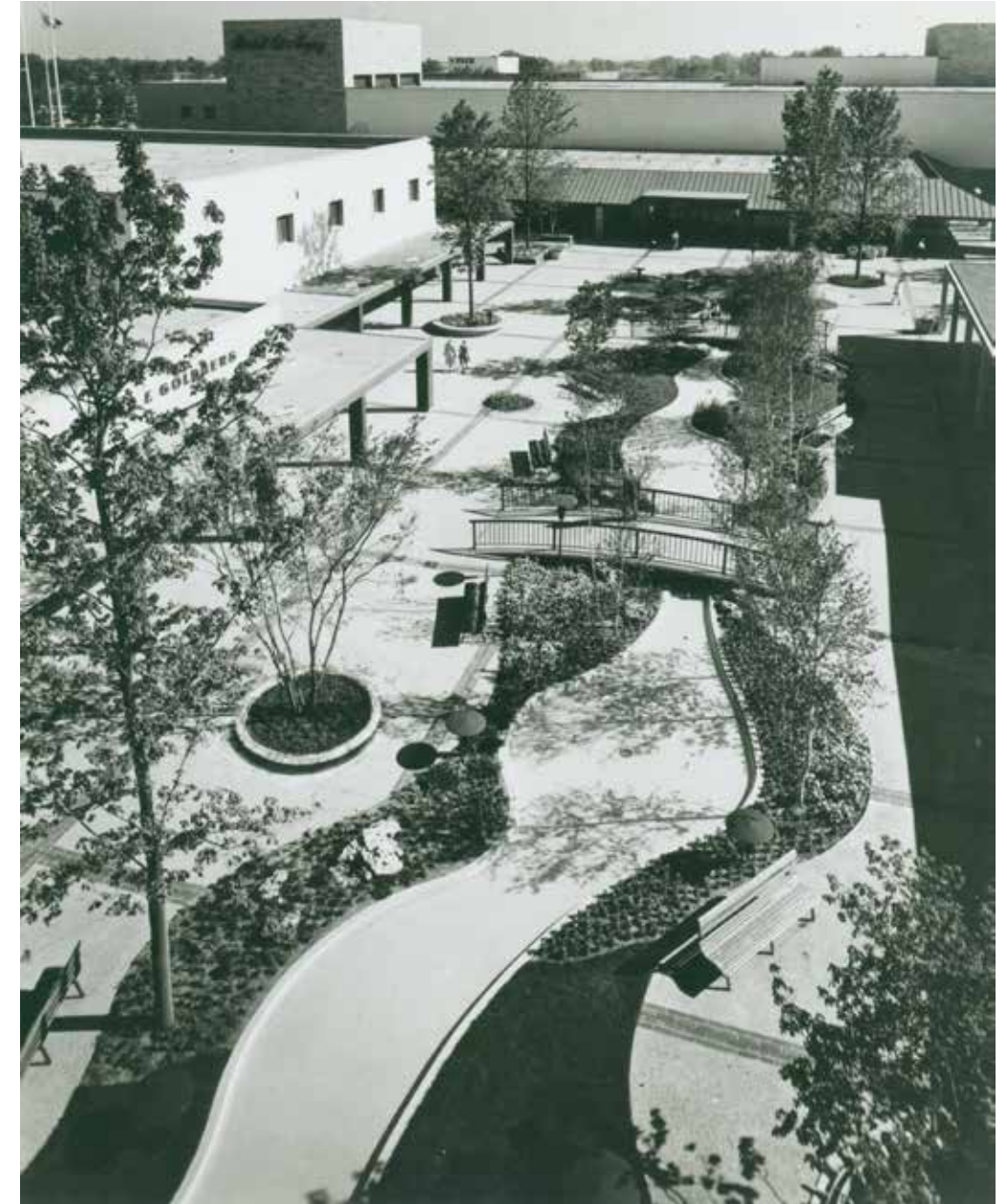


Lawrence on the deck with Anna watching, 1966. Courtesy LHC.



Girl playing in fountain, c. 1957. Courtesy LHC.

Halprin later bemoaned his shopping center experience as representative of rampant suburbanization. However, while few aspects of Halprin's original design survive, Old Orchard remains an open-air mall and the landscape design is still touted as its unique feature.



Main (north) garden area, 1956. Courtesy LHC.

reflected the force of the wind, solar orientation, and views. The buildings were designed to blend into the landscape with sloped roofs, and along with windscreens of plantings, fences, and mounding, created outdoor spaces shielded from the wind with maximum exposure to the sun. In deference to the regional character, wood and shingles were the mandated exterior material, building height was limited, and cars were screened and their numbers limited. Indigenous plant material was preferred, and owners were discouraged from “excessive plantings which detract from the natural surroundings”; no lawns or other markers of suburbia were permitted. A program of meadow and hedgerow restoration



Sea Ranch Lodge, 2013. Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith. Courtesy CHA.



Path along the cliff face, 2016. Photograph by Chris Thompson.

was implemented. Ultimately a site design and architectural guidelines were encoded into the Sea Ranch Association’s Covenants Codes and Restrictions, and a design review committee was established to approve all new construction and modifications.

Since its inception, Sea Ranch has become an architectural showcase, featuring the work of Charles Moore, William Turnbull, Donlyn Lyndon, and Richard Whitaker, all Berkeley architecture professors. They designed the iconic

civic leader, the daring developer William Roth, heir to the Matson Shipping Line and the leader of the San Francisco Planning and Renewal Association, purchased the property in 1962. Roth hired Halprin and Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons to imagine how the property might be preserved. Two years later Ghirardelli Square opened, the first large-scale adaptive reuse project in the United States and a landmark in both historic preservation and urban design.

Ghirardelli Square was a resounding economic and social success. It was the prototype for scores of rehabilitations, preservation projects, and “festival marketplaces,” a term coined by James Rouse and Benjamin Thompson, the developer and architect of Boston’s Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Baltimore’s Harborplace. In an article on the “Rouse-ification of Lower Manhattan” the critic Jane Holtz Kay later bemoaned what she called the “Ghirardelli Square syndrome,” critiquing the similarity of many projects in adaptive reuse.<sup>1</sup> Communities across the country, however, desired their own Ghirardelli Square. The impact was international. Covent Garden’s transformation was described as a “Ghirardelli Square for London.”<sup>2</sup>

At the time, the concept was a bold experiment. The red brick exterior shell of the buildings was preserved along with portions of the interior fabric, while the interior machinery and furnishings were gutted. In what became conventional adaptive reuse practice, the image of the site was retained, while the interior was subject to dramatic modification to suit new uses. In a sense, the design mediates between signifying past use and historical association through the exterior and interior contemporary use. The most dramatic features were the retention of the 1915 French Gothic Clock Tower and the reorientation of the huge 25-by-125-foot Ghirardelli sign on a scaffold atop the building to face the bay.



“Notes on the Ghirardelli Center for Bill Roth,” concept drawing, 1962. Courtesy LHC.



"The Planting Plan for Levi's," drawing, 1980. Courtesy LHC.

California Gold Rush, when Strauss founded the company and helped build the new city, and the plaza representing the present day.

The project exemplifies Halprin's distinctive use of materials, drawing attention to the qualities of stone, concrete, and water to create a refined design language. The stones change from rough boulders that look randomly placed on the grassy mounds and in the watercourse to quarried blocks along the pathways which double as seating. Similarly, concrete evolves from rough to smooth to polished. A signature of many of Halprin designs, the interaction of water with a variety of surfaces is also featured. There are cultural allusions as well, to an Italian piazza on the one hand and to a Japanese garden on the other,



Stream through park, 2013. Photograph by author.