

Santa Barbara Architect Frank D Robinson



Frank D Robinson's career as a designer and builder spanned from 1958 - 2000. His studio & drafting rooms were in Santa Barbara's Historic El Paseo, suite 129.

Frank D Robinson architectural designs* were influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's concept of open floor plans with expansive windows to create luminous and inviting spaces blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor living. His use of unique geometric patterns and natural materials throughout a home make his one-of-a-kind designer homes living works of art.

Frank D Robinson was an original settler of the bohemian movement culture in Santa Barbara's East Mountain Drive area at the edge of Los Padres Natural Forest. Located there was a thriving community of artists, free-thinkers and rebels from the late 1940's to late 1960's. They formed a joyful neighborly camaraderie, with purportedly the first-ever hot tub, thus the icon of the Mountain Drive community came into existence. This environment, along with his charismatic personality, flowed into his architectural designs.

Frank D Robinson

395 Loma Media Road Residence Designing & Building

In 1960 Terry and Edna Baker-Spencer set out to purchase a property plot with city, ocean, island and canyon views. To their delight they discovered the perfect location at 395 Loma Media Road. The next step was finding an architect with similar mathematical, engineering and artistic flair to create their home blending their vision of California modernism style. California modernism is known for creativity, individuality, and exploring new ways of design and construction.

The hunt ended when Terry's work associate invited him to his newly built home by Frank D Robinson on Mountain Drive and was introduced to Frank D Robinson who was a local Santa Barbara architect with a flair for California artistic modern mathematical design – a true artist full of life sporting a French beret and a square gold earring. Terry promptly stated, “this is the man that will build our home”.

Frank carefully examined the 395 Loma Media Road property plot, which many architects said was unbuildable. Frank - having experience building homes in the Mountain Drive and Coyote Road area - assured Terry and Edna their property lot was buildable. Frank was promptly hired and the journey of these three talented people commenced as they teamed together to design and build a very special unique home. Frank and Terry ‘put their heads together’ using their engineering & artistic backgrounds to design methods needed for specialized procedures of building a home on the hillside in the early 1960s. From foundation beam posts joined together into bedrock, to the hyperbolic parabolic wood roof resembling outstretched butterfly wings alighting over the main living level + floor to ceiling windows, and walls of glass, they achieved what they set out to accomplish - a truly unique home with city, ocean, island and canyon views from all its levels.

*The UCSB University Architecture and Design Collection and Architecture Museum (UCSB University Art Museum) houses many of Frank D Robinson's architectural plans including 395 Loma Media Road.

Credits for References:

UCSB University Art Museum, UC Santa Barbara, Architecture and Design Collection and Architecture Museum, The Architecture and Design Collection of the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at University of California, Santa Barbara. (AD&A Museum UC Santa Barbara), Santa Barbara Historical Museum, Santa Barbara Regional Oral History Clearinghouse, “Frank Robinson Interview,” Gledhill Library Oral History, Montecito Magazine Summer 2017, TV Santa Barbara - Santa Barbara Historical Museum. Memories of Mountain Drive a talk by author and journalist Elias Chiacos and Chris Ervin (Head Archivist for the Gledhill Library at the Santa Barbara Historical Museum.) A short history of the architecture and design collection - the official blog of UC Santa Barbara's Art, Design & Architecture Museum, Houzz Kitchen of the Week: A mid-century Marvel in Santa Barbara, Mountain Drive – Santa Barbara's Pioneer Bohemian Community-Elias Chiacos. Independent 2008 Tea Fire Devastes Bohemia Mountain Drive. El paseo and courtyard <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/5-129-El-Paseo-Santa-Barbara-CA/20339541/>