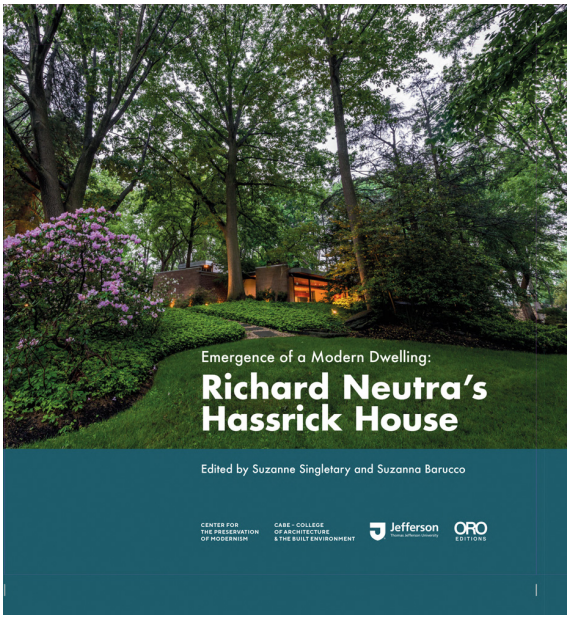
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Emergence of a Modern Dwelling

Richard Neutra's Hassrick House

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ISBN	9781954081178
Publisher	ORO Editions
Binding	Hardback
Territory	World excluding USA, Canada, Australasia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan
Size	228 mm x 228 mm
Pages	80 Pages
Price	£18.95

- Approaches to historic preservation pedagogy
- Analysis of mid-century modern architecture
- New material on Richard Neutra's designs in Pennsylvania

In the East Falls neighbourhood of Philadelphia, just beyond the northern boundary of the Thomas Jefferson University's East Falls campus, stands the Hassrick House (1958–61), designed by celebrated architect Richard Neutra, an icon of mid-century modern style. Often described as an East Coast interpretation of California Modernism, the Hassrick House is one of only three buildings designed by Neutra within the city limits.

Thomas Jefferson University's relationship with the house began in the summer of 2015 when Andrew Hart, assistant professor of Architecture in the College of Architecture & the Built Environment initiated a series of summer courses to study the house. The first multidisciplinary group of students engaged in architectural survey, drawing, and photography. Subsequent summer courses refined the architectural drawings, following the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) standards. Yet another student cohort undertook documentary research to uncover the history of the house and its occupants. Then owners George Acosta and John Hauser were supportive collaborators with students in this process. Neutra's architecture and his relationship with the Hassricks – particularly Barbara who emerged as the primary client voice while the house was being designed – captured the hearts, minds, and imaginations of everyone who engaged with the house. As one student recalled, "We have all gotten swept away in the stories unfolding from our research." In 2018, Hauser and Acosta sold the property to the university with the understanding that the house would continue to be used for educational purposes. In George's words, "I had come to realize that the students can be the future custodians of that home. They can be the eyes. They can be the archives. In a way, it becomes all of ours to share."

This publication chronicles the students' findings that shed light on Neutra's design process, his collaboration with his clients, as well as the unsung role of Thaddeus Longstreth as Neutra's proxy negotiator throughout the design and construction stages. During its approximately 63-year lifespan, the Hassrick House tells a saga of design, dwelling, neglect, restoration, and reinvention today as a laboratory for learning. In many respects, the history of the Hassrick House tells an important story of the modernist movement in the US, both regionally and nationally.

Suzanna Barucco is an adjunct professor, historic preservationist, and principal of sbk + partners, LLC, a historic preservation consulting practice providing professional services for the assessment, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, sites, and landscapes.

Alison Eberhardt is a graduate student in the Historic Preservation department at Thomas Jefferson University and a graduate of the TJU Bachelor of Architecture program with a minor in Historic Preservation. She is a founding member of the Students for Historic Preservation with three years of architectural experience working on nationally and locally recognised historic structures in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Andrew Hart is an assistant professor at TJU's College of Architecture & the Built Environment and specialises in linking various modes and methods of architectural practice and communication. He teaches courses in drawing, modeling, visualisation, representation and virtual reality, historical documentation, and alternative methods of hybrid drawing, and has deep connections with community instigated design.

Suzanne Singletary is a professor at the College of Architecture & the Built Environment at TJU, teaches history and theory of historic preservation, architecture and design. As director of the Master of Science in Historic Preservation and the Center for the Preservation of Modernism, Dr. Singletary teaches courses on critical issues in preservation and the restoration and rehabilitation of modern and mid-century modern buildings and sites. Currently she also serves as associate dean for New Academic Initiatives and Graduate Studies.

Published 23rd Mar 2022