STERN HALL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

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N.B. The existing conditions photographs were taken by Elizabeth Luebben (EL) in March 2008, and by Michael R. Corbett (MRC) in May 2008.
INTRODUCTION

Stern Hall is a highly significant building that merits careful preservation. It is significant as the first women’s dormitory on the University of California, Berkeley campus and the first University operated residence for women students only in the UC system; as an early local example of Modern Architecture; and the first Modern building on the campus. From the beginning, it attracted wide interest from the local and international architectural communities. Early visitors included notable leaders in the field, including Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, and Steen Eiler Rasmussen. The construction and siting of Stern Hall in a Modern idiom and informal, rambling style, initiated the transition in campus architecture and planning from the earlier Beaux Arts / Period Revival eras to the Modern era. Although a few neo-classical buildings were constructed after Stern, the design character of the Berkeley campus began to shift with the construction of Stern Hall.

The fact that the lead architect for Stern later became a key figure in planning on the Berkeley campus further underscores its importance as an early Modern era building at Berkeley. Stern Hall was designed by two very significant architects, William Wilson Wurster (1895-1972) of San Francisco and Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873-1954) of New York. William Wurster was also an important leader in architectural education. At the University of California he was Chairman of the School of Architecture (1950 to 1959) and established the College of Environmental Design and served as its first Dean (1959 to 1963). The Stern Hall interiors and its landscape were the work of two noted women designers, Frances Elkins and Isabella Worn. The building also contains an important mural, which was commissioned by the building’s donor for her own home and later bequeathed to the University for display in her namesake residence hall.

Stern Hall is listed on the State’s Historic Resources Inventory and appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Changes or work affecting the original (1941) building and 1959 Addition, as well as the adjacent site should comply with the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Stern Hall is significant for its architecture, which includes the original interior design and furnishings. A significant interior feature added later is a mural by the influential Mexican artist, Diego Rivera. Stern Hall is significant for its association with the important architects and designers: William Wurster, Harvey Wiley Corbett, Frances Elkins and Isabella Worn, and for its association with the donor, Rosalie Meyer Stern and her family, important benefactors to the University of California.

The original structure has survived nearly 70 years and although the building has been expanded, and other structures constructed nearby, many of Stern’s character-defining architectural and
design features are intact or recoverable. The building’s additions have generally been sympathetic to the original design.

The building was constructed in 1941-42, seventy-one years after women were first admitted to the University and twelve years after the construction of the first university-owned dormitory for men, Bowles Hall. This time lag reflects the University’s reluctance to assume the responsibility for providing housing for students. Like Bowles Hall, Stern Hall was designed and constructed using private funds. Rosalie Meyer Stern donated $250,000 (eventually raised to $285,000) to the University of California for the construction of a men’s dormitory as a memorial to her late husband, Sigmund Stern, UC class of 1879. The site and program changed after design had begun, when the original hillside site, between Bowles Hall and Memorial Stadium, was discovered to be unsuitable for construction. A new site was selected to the north and west of the original site and the building program changed from a men’s to a women’s dormitory.

The donor played an active role throughout the entire planning, design, and construction process, beginning with the selection of the architects, and later the interior and landscape designers. The carefully selected design team reflected Mrs. Stern’s determination to build a Modern structure that was comfortable and home-like rather than institutional in character.

The original building was designed to house 90 women. Major additions, in 1959 by the office of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, and in 1981 by Marquis Associates nearly tripled the number of occupants. While many of the University of California dormitories have become co-educational facilities, Stern Hall has remained an all-women’s residence.

The original panoramic views and natural hillside setting, around which the building was designed, have diminished over time with the construction of large buildings on the central campus below Stern Hall and on the hill above it. Not long after Stern opened, Latimer Hall blocked views. The most significant change occurred in 1990 with the construction of the Foothill Student Housing that closely surrounds Stern Hall on three sides. However, the open space to the west of the building remains, including the rolling natural topography and scattered trees down to Gayley Road.

This Historic Structures Report is designed to be a useful planning tool to guide future decisions on appropriate use, maintenance, or possible alterations to Stern Hall and the adjacent site. The report begins with an evaluation of the property according to National Register criteria. This establishes the building as a highly significant cultural resource that should be retained and preserved following the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Color-coded floor plans mapping the varying levels of significance and sensitivity to change, and a short Summary of Recommendations provide quick reference guides to the detailed information found in the Building Description and Site Description sections that follow. The final section of the report is a history of the building and site within its historic, social, and architectural contexts.
EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Stern Hall is listed on the State Historic Resources Inventory. It appears to be eligible for the National Register under criteria A, B, and C at the state level of significance. The period of significance is 1942 – 1959.

CRITERION A

Under criterion A, Stern Hall is significant in the area of women’s history as the first dormitory for women at the University of California and at the Berkeley campus. Although women had been admitted to the university in 1870, the second year of operation, facilities, program, and support for women lagged behind those for men. The first dormitory for men, Bowles Hall, was opened in 1929; Stern Hall followed for 90 women in 1942 with additions in 1959 and 1981, establishing a measure of equality in residence facilities. Like Bowles Hall, Stern Hall provided a distinctive living environment closer to that of the sororities and fraternities than to the large-scale residence halls that followed. Stern Hall is significant at the State level of significance because it was built to serve women from throughout the State of California.

CRITERION B

Stern Hall is significant under Criterion B for its association with Rosalie Meyer Stern, an important philanthropist who donated most of the money for Stern Hall and who was closely involved with the architect, interior decorator, and landscape architect in the design and realization of Stern Hall. Among her many philanthropies, the two principal physical manifestations of her work were Stern Hall at the University of California and Sigmund Stern Grove, named for her husband, in San Francisco. More than her home and the other areas of her public involvement – the San Francisco Museum of Art, the San Francisco Opera Association, and the San Francisco Playground Commission – Stern Hall and Stern Grove represent her important contributions to public life.

Stern Hall is significant at the State level of significance because it was built for a State institution to serve women from throughout the State of California.

CRITERION C

Stern Hall is significant under Criterion C because it represents the work of a master and it possesses high artistic value.

Stern Hall is significant as the work of a master, the architectural team of William Wilson Wurster and Corbett & MacMurray of New York. Wurster, the principal designer, was one of the most influential architects in California in the mid twentieth century, especially as a leading
figure in the adaptation of modernism to California conditions. Stern Hall occupied a critical place in Wurster’s career as his first major contribution to the University of California campus, where he would be invited back a few years later to serve as Chairman of the Department of Architecture and subsequently as Dean of the College of Environmental Design.

Harvey Wiley Corbett of Corbett & MacMurray, played a largely advisory role in the project. Corbett was a leading figure in the design of the great modern skyscrapers of New York in the 1910s – 1930s, by virtue of his collaboration with Hugh Ferriss in zoning studies for tall buildings and participation in the team responsible for Rockefeller Center. Corbett was born in San Francisco and studied under Bernard Maybeck at the University of California in the 1890s. Stern Hall was the only building to which Corbett is known to have contributed in California.

Stern Hall, the first example of Modernism at the University of California, has been praised for its design from the time it was built to the present. A draft letter from the office of Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons to the AIA national award nominating committee, dated November 1, 1976, described Stern Hall as:

“…a new expression of concrete and glass based on consideration of living, view, and light, and relation of spaces and the flow between. To this was added the idea of reinforcing form by use of color, rich reds, blues and off white.

“That this was successful is testified to by the many architects and designers who, early, visited the University and declared STERN HALL ‘the only modern building on the Campus.’ Among such people were Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, Steen Eiler Rasmussen and others from England, Australia and the continent.” (CED Archive)

These judgements have held up as the building is still well-regarded in recent guidebooks. In 2002, Harvey Helfand wrote in part: “The building reflects Wurster’s strength in Modern and Bay Tradition residential design, through its indoor-outdoor relationships and use of materials and color” (Helfand 2002: 250) And, in 2005 Sally Woodbridge described it as, “A well-planned complex sensitively sited on difficult terrain.” (Woodbridge 2005: 279)

**Integrity**

Integrity is measured by the seven aspects of integrity, in relation to the nature of significance under Criteria A, B, and C and the period of significance – 1942 to 1959.

**Location:** Stern Hall stands on its original location and retains integrity of location.

**Design:** Since it was first completed in 1942, Stern Hall has had two major additions and has undergone numerous minor alterations. Following the original design by the association of
William Wilson Wurster and Corbett & MacMurray which was completed in 1942, an addition by Wurster’s firm, Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons was completed in 1959. This was in the style, materials, and spirit of the original. A second addition by Marquis Associates that was completed in 1981, was similar in some ways but different in materials and internal planning.

The original and the 1959 addition were completed within the period of significance and retain integrity. The 1981 addition was built only 27 years ago, far less than the standard 50-year threshold for evaluation; it is too young to be evaluated at this time.

Setting: The most significant changes to Stern Hall since its period of significance are to its setting. When it was built, Stern Hall was isolated on a hillside above the campus. There were panoramic views to the west that included San Francisco Bay, the city of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Mount Tamalpais, and to the east was a steep forested hillside.

This setting has changed with the completion of Foothill Student Housing behind Stern Hall and at its north end in 1991, and with the construction of Latimer Hall, and later Stanley Hall across Gayley Road in 2007. Foothill Student Housing radically changed the relationship of Stern Hall to the hillside at the rear; instead of a natural area there is dense housing. Stanley Hall blocked a portion of the view from Stern Hall to the west.

The downhill setting to the west, between the building and Gayley Road, with a sloping, natural topography, low ground cover, and scattering of trees; frames the most important surviving views from, and towards, Stern Hall.

Materials: The original materials of Stern Hall – its concrete structure, steel windows, vertical grain Douglas Fir plywood used throughout the interior, and simple hardware and light fixtures are largely intact. Stern Hall retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship: Stern Hall is the product of modern industrial methods of manufacturing and construction. Evidence of workmanship from these methods exists in the structure and materials of the building. The building retains integrity of Workmanship.

Feeling: Integrity of feeling remains strongly present in Stern Hall in the relationship of the principal volumes of the building to the hillside site and their orientation to the landscape and the views.

Association: Integrity of association with Rosalie Stern and the use of the building as a women’s dorm remains strong.
METHODS

BUILDING HISTORY, HISTORICAL CONTEXTS, AND EVALUATION

The building history, historical contexts, and evaluation of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places were prepared by Michael R. Corbett, an architectural historian who meets the qualifications of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. Site visits and research were conducted in May and June 2008. The principle site visit was made on 17 May 2008 in the company of Mary Hardy, architectural conservator. This report was prepared in late May and June 2008.

The purpose of the Building History, Historical Contexts, and Evaluation Sections of this report is to present the history of Stern Hall in its historical contexts in order to evaluate it for eligibility to the National Register. This is important for the identification of character defining features (see the following section of this report) and for establishing priorities in the treatment of the building and site. Although it was previously listed on the State Historic Resources Inventory, it has only been briefly recorded and has not previously had the level of documentation or analysis necessary for evaluation for the National Register. There are various important sources on Stern Hall. Stern Hall was publicized in architectural journals and elsewhere at the time it opened. Because of its construction for the University of California, its conception, design, and construction are amply documented in the files of the University Archives housed in the Bancroft Library. The files include official reports; photographs; correspondence of the president, deans, the comptroller, the campus architect, and the office of the Superintendent of Grounds and Buildings; and minutes of the committees of the Board of Regents, especially the Finance Committee and the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

Because of the magnitude of this material and the workload of the reference staff due to the temporary closing of the Bancroft Library on 23 May 2008, the material on Stern Hall in the University Archives has not been exhausted. The principal source for the history presented here was the files of the Finance Committee of the Board of Regents (CU-5 Series 2).

In addition, there are extensive materials on Stern Hall at the College of Environmental Design Archives (CED Archives) in Wurster Hall. Among these are early architectural and site design sketches, architectural drawings including some details, specifications, photographs and correspondence (1939 to 1942, and 1958) in the William Wilson Wurster papers and the Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE) office files. Also, included in the collection is correspondence and specifications for the installation of the Diego Rivera mural. Most of these materials were reviewed for this project.

The Office of Physical and Environmental Planning (PEP) provided architectural plans from 1941, 1958, 1981, and 1983 from the files and archives of the Capital Projects office of the
University. Building files in the Office of Facilities and Maintenance at 2000 Carleton were also consulted.

The Roger Sturtevant Collection at Oakland Museum include photographs taken of Stern Hall soon after completion. A selection of prints from the collection is exhibited on the wall of the Stern Hall Living Room. Due to a current construction project at the Oakland Museum, the Sturtevant Collection was not available during the preparation of this report.

Because the architects of the building, William W. Wurster and Harvey Wiley Corbett, are both major American architects, there are voluminous materials on them as well and both have been addressed in numerous publications. Wurster has been the subject of several books, notably *An Everyday Modernism* edited by Marc Treib. Surprisingly, no individual monograph has been written about Corbett although his work is discussed in numerous books and articles on the history of American skyscrapers. Information on the structural engineer and the mechanical engineer came from the University Archives.

For the history of Stern Hall since it opened, the principal source was a sampling of the minutes of the Stern Hall Association. Additional history on life and events at Stern Hall may be gathered through an index to the *Daily Cal* at the Bancroft Library and through a more thorough review of the minutes of the Stern Hall Association in the University Archives.

In addition to the history of the building itself, various historical contexts within which the building was built were also researched. Specifically, these were the history of the campus and the planning and development of housing in Berkeley and on the campus. For the history of the campus a number of published sources were helpful, especially Clausen and Sidener, Helfand, Pickerell and Dornin, Sibley, Siegel & Strain, and Woodbridge. Information on housing came from the University Archives, Helfand, and communication from Steve Finacom in the UC, Office of Physical and Environmental Planning (PEP).

On the important role of the Stern and Haas families at the University of California, it was surprising not to find an article on their collective contributions.

Finally, the discussion of the evaluation of Stern Hall, its cultural importance and period of significance is based on *National Register Bulletin 15* (United States Department of the Interior).

**HISTORIC LANDSCAPE**

The historic landscape and landscape sections of the report were prepared by Denise Bradley, landscape architect and landscape historian, who meets the qualifications of the Secretary of the Interior. In addition to the repositories cited above, the following were consulted for information
specific to the site and persons associated with the Stern Hall site: the Pacific Aerial Survey, Oakland; the San Francisco Public Library; The Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture, San Francisco Botanical Garden; and various internet-based collections of the University of California, Berkeley.

SITE SURVEY

A comprehensive survey was carried out on the building and the adjacent site in March 2008 by Mary Hardy, architectural conservator; Denise Bradley, landscape architect and landscape historian; and Elizabeth Luebben, photographer. In late May, during the recess between academic sessions, Mary Hardy and Michael Corbett, architectural historian, surveyed areas of the building that were previously inaccessible. (N.B., Some occupied bedrooms and locked storage spaces were not accessible during this project.)

PRESERVATION APPROACH AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

An Historic Structures Report (HSR) provides a systematic framework for the investigation and evaluation of an historic property. The purpose of an HSR is to compile and synthesize information that conveys why a particular property is historically significant, and to present this information in a format that facilitates informed decisions on how to manage the property. An HSR lays out the history of the building(s) and site within an historical, architectural, and social context, and includes information about important individuals or events associated with the property. It describes the building in its original and current condition, identifying alterations, and listing character-defining features to be preserved and treated according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. The National Register Criteria underlie the Evaluation, Level of Significance ratings, and Condition assessments of this HSR.

The National Register of Historic Places Criteria is used by the National Parks Service, state agencies, and other government and professionals in private practice to determine whether properties are historically significant, and to identify the level of significance, areas of significance, and historical contexts of eligible properties. The criteria provide guidance and consistency in determining whether resources retain their historical integrity and in identifying character-defining features.

Integrity is a measure of authenticity of a property in relation to its period of significance.

Character-defining features are those elements that give the building and site their unique sense of place. These features are highly sensitive to change, and if lost or altered, may affect the integrity of the property, reducing its historic significance and our ability to understand the property within its historic and architectural contexts.
The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing standards for national preservation programs and for advising federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties provide guidelines for the Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction of historically significant properties. These terms are defined as follows:

Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

Restoration is undertaken to depict a property at a particular period of time in history, while removing evidence of other periods.

Reconstruction re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property and is appropriate only in some circumstances, usually for interpreting the historic property.
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Stern Hall is a significant cultural resource that should be retained and preserved following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. 
(http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide). Stern Hall’s character-defining features, identified in the Physical Description section of this report, should be preserved and maintained, repaired or restored when necessary using appropriate conservation methods and materials. If a feature is beyond repair it should be replaced in kind. The National Park Service Technical Preservation Services website (http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/) provides published guidelines for the appropriate preservation treatment of historic properties, features, and materials.

Windows: The various types of wood sash windows throughout Stern Hall are significant character-defining features. They should be retained, and maintained as operable. They should be repaired and restored when necessary, using appropriate materials and conservation methods. If a window is beyond repair and must be replaced, the original should be replicated in like materials and workmanship. They should never be replaced using different materials. See Preservation Brief 9: Repair of Historic Wooden Windows (http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief09.htm) for specific information on the appropriate preservation treatment of historic wooden windows.

Doors: Original exterior glazed doors should be maintained. No new exterior doors should be added. Original wood interior doors should be retained and the original stained finish preserved. They should not be painted. New doors should not be added between spaces that were original open to one another. If such doors are needed to meet current building code, they should be as transparent as possible.

Hardware: All original hardware should be retained. If alteration is required to meet current building code, hardware should be retrofitted rather than replaced.

Finishes:

Stained Wood Features and Finishes: The original stained wood finish found throughout Stern Hall should be maintained and should not be painted.

Stained Concrete Floors: The original floors finish was highly polished stained concrete. These should be retained and maintained. Floors should not be painted. A well maintained wax finish will minimize wear to the colored surface.
**Painted Exposed Board-form Concrete** is a character-defining finish at the exterior and some interior walls. It should be maintained and never covered with a thick finish coat that would obscure the surface relief created by the concrete forms. See Preservation Brief 15: Preservation of Historic Concrete ([http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief15.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief15.htm)) for specific information on the appropriate preservation treatment of historic concrete.

**Paint**: The original interior and exterior paint colors were important aspects of the original character of the building. The color schemes should be preserved where intact and re-established where they have been altered. Do not paint concrete surfaces that are integrally colored. Preserve the original paint scheme in which all metal elements were painted in a high-gloss finish, while walls were a matte finish.

**Light Fixtures**: All original light fixtures should be preserved in their original locations.

**Original Furniture and furnishings**: All original furniture and furnishings should be preserved in their original locations.

**Art Work**: The Diego Rivera mural and associated sideboard donated by Mrs. Stern and the portrait of Mrs. Stern donated by her heirs are significant for their association with the original building donor. They should be retained in place.

**Alterations and Additions**: If an addition to the building is considered at some future time its design and construction should follow the Secretary of the Interiors Standards. See Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns ([http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief14.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief14.htm)) for specific guidance on the appropriate design approach for additions to historically significant buildings.
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE DIAGRAMS

The purpose of the Stern Hall site survey was to assess the property’s current level of integrity by identifying its character-defining features, and determining what features have been lost, altered, or physically degraded to an extent that could compromise the significance of a feature. Condition ratings are defined as:

*Excellent*: The space or feature is in virtually original condition.

*Good*: The space or feature is intact and sound.

*Fair*: The space or feature show signs of wear or deterioration.

*Poor*: The space or feature is very deteriorated, badly damaged, missing or not functioning.

Stern Hall has been occupied and well maintained throughout the life of the building, and it is currently in good to fair condition. All spaces have been heavily used for more than sixty-five years, and no part of the building was found to be in excellent condition. At the same time, no areas were found to be in poor condition.

The current Level of Significance was rated for the various parts of the building and site. Level of Significance is based on the historic value and condition of the component, and is related to its level of sensitivity to change. This information was recorded on color-coded floor plans which follow. These graphics are intended as a convenient reference, but cannot substitute for careful reading the full HSR. Level of Significance ratings are defined as:

*Very Significant*: The space or feature was built during the period of significance, and is central to the historic character of the property. It remains intact or with only minor alterations, and is in good condition. These components are highly sensitive to change.

*Significant*: The space or feature was built during the period of significance, is strongly associated with the qualities that make the property historically important, but is of secondary importance, or has been altered, or is in fair or poor condition. Alternatively, the space or feature was not built during the period of significance, but is historically significant. These components are sensitive to change.

*Contributing*: The space or feature was built during the period of significance and is not extraordinarily important in isolation, but contains sufficient historic character to play a role in the overall significance of the property. Alternatively, the space or feature was not built during the period of significance, but is architecturally compatible with the original. These components are less sensitive to change.
Non-contributing: The space or feature was built during the period of significance, but has had major additions or incompatible alterations, or it is in poor condition, so that little or no historic character remains. Alternatively, the space or feature was not built during the period of significance and is incompatible in style, material, scale, character or use with the original building. These components are not particularly sensitive to change.

(N.B. The use of the terms ”Very Significant” or “Significant” does not necessarily equate to the definition for these same terms as they are used in the context of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The fact a space or feature is called “Very Significant” or “Significant” in this HSR does not automatically mean that the alteration or removal of that feature, space, or the entire structure would meet the CEQA criteria for what is called a “Significant impact on the environment.”)
Illustration 1. Diagram of Building Layout
Illustration 2. Level of Significance and Sensitivity to Change, Original Stern Hall Lower Level Public Wing, 1st floor Bedroom Wing.
Illustration 3. Level of Significance and Sensitivity to Change, Original Stern Hall Upper Level Public Wing, 2nd & 3rd floors Bedroom Wing.
Illustration 4. Level of Significance and Sensitivity to Change, Original Stern Hall 4th floor Bedroom Wing.
Illustration 5. Level of Significance and Sensitivity to Change, 1959 Addition.
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The original Stern Hall was organized as three linked structures running roughly north to south along the same contour line of the hill: a high two-story Public Wing, flanked on the north by a one-story Service Wing, and on the south by a four-story, C-shaped Bedroom Wing. Constructed into the hillside, the building allowed access from grade to different floor levels and provided a clear separation between public, private, and service functions and circulation. Formal entry was from the uphill (east) side of the Public Wing.

Mrs. Stern’s intent was to provide a home-like setting. This was accomplished in part by visually breaking down the institutional scale of the building by tucking it into the hillside, dividing the mass into smaller, dissimilar units, and accentuating the distinction between elements by a bold use of color.

Wurster explained his use of color to Mrs. Stern:

“The concrete will be painted colors as follows: Blue – All under side of roof overhangs, [and] back wall of sun bathing balconies. Yellow – Ceiling of sun bathing balconies, [and] Back wall of entrance porch. Red – Service Wing, South face of Main Bedroom Block (will avoid glare), Office Wing and shelter of entrance, [and] Underside of Living Room Balcony. Sand Color – Two projecting wings of Bedroom block, North side of Bedroom Block, [and] South side of Living Room Block. This variety will knit the building to its site – to the eucalyptus trees – and make it seem more a residence than an institution.”

(Wurster to Mrs. Stern, May 6, 1942, CED Archives. Underline added.)

Horizontal features: roof overhangs and cut-aways, lids over door and window openings, and balconies and trellises cast changing patterns of light and shadow on the exterior. This too, helped to break down the building’s mass. The horizontal elements regulated the amount of direct light on the interior, and the quality of the light. By painting the soffits a warm yellow or light blue, the reflected light appeared to be warmer or cooler respectively.

The building is constructed of reinforced concrete. The roofs appear to be flat – although the roofs of the Public Wing and east end of the Bedroom Wing slope gently down toward the east – and overhang the painted board-form-finish walls. Windows vary in size, type and placement pattern, revealing on the exterior the varied interior program. Glazed doors and oversized fixed or casement windows are grouped at the public rooms, opening large wall areas to natural light and views. Bedrooms are distinguished by tall double-hung windows with partial height security
screens. These appear as single windows at the single-occupancy bedrooms and are paired at the double-occupancy bedrooms. Regularly spaced square awning windows light the corridors, and similarly sized hopper windows light bathrooms and service areas. The original clear glazing has been replaced with textured glass to provide visual privacy in some locations.

The glazed west wall, from foundation to eaves, of the main Stair Hall, visually separates the Public Wing from the Bedroom Wing.

Covered outdoor areas, balconies and trellises soften the transition between interior and exterior, and increase the amount of usable space. Formal entry to the building was from a long covered walkway that ran along the southern edge of a Walled Garden. The garden, shielded by the building from the prevailing wind contrasted in character with the wide balcony that runs the full length of the Public Wing on the west. A light wire mesh guardrail allows maximum views from the public rooms.

More private outdoor space is provided in the Bedroom area. “Sun bathing” balconies, screened by solid sheet metal rails, terminate the projecting bedroom wings at each floor level. The Bedroom Court Terrace, a brick patio in the trapezoidal space formed by the projecting bedroom wings provided “…a private area for informal lounging – particularly on week ends – no guests here – .” (Wurster to John Gregg, July 13, 1942)

A four-story reinforced concrete dormitory addition designed by Wurster’s expanded firm, Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, was built at the south end of Stern Hall in 1959. (Both of his partners, Bernardi and Emmons, were employees of Wurster during the design and construction of the original Stern Hall.) The simple rectangular addition is sited along the same contour line as the original building, and constructed in the same materials, with similar roof height, window treatment, and exterior paint colors. Aside from the main roof overhang, however, there are no projecting architectural elements and no captured outdoor space. Another notable difference evident from the exterior is the lack of single occupancy bedrooms. All bedrooms in the 1959 addition are double occupancy, and consistent with the earlier building design, these are expressed on the exterior by paired double-hung windows with wire mesh security screens.

In 1981, another four-story dormitory addition was built, again at the south end of the building. The addition is sited perpendicular to the contours of the hill, and projects west. Though carefully designed to be compatible with the rest of the building, the 1981 Addition differs from the original building in its type of construction and materials, and in its relation to the site. The 1981 Addition is wood-frame construction with painted stucco exterior finish, while the original building and the 1959 Addition are reinforced concrete structures. The roof of the 1981 Addition is flat, like the earlier buildings, but it has no overhang. While the original building provided a
strong visual connection and access to the landscape, neither the 1959 nor the 1981 Additions incorporate exterior space as extensions of the interior space.

The glazed link between the new construction and the 1959 Addition, is a clear reference the glazed Stair Hall between the Public Wing and original Bedroom Wing.

Changes:
Changes to the exterior of Stern Hall are most evident at the north end of the building, in the area of the original Service Wing, and on the east in the area of the walled garden and covered entry path. The path was shortened considerably and the walled garden was demolished to accommodate changes to the entry drive loop and parking area. Change also occurred on the west side of the Dining Room, where the projecting bay was enlarged. A new elevator tower was added in 1981 east of the main Stair Tower, and a small metal structure was added near its base.

The exterior concrete was originally painted with a matte finish (California Stucco Company concrete waterproof hydraulic cement paint). Metal trellises, rails, and door and window surrounds were covered with a glossy lead and oil-based paint. For the most part, the original exterior color scheme has endured, but colors have faded and surfaces have been repainted. Only six years after construction, Wurster complained about the paint to the Division of Architecture and Engineering, and received this response, “Thank you for your Oct. 8 letter relative to the lack of paint at Stern Dormitory. I have noticed the fading but have failed to suggest its correction. Your continued interest in the job is appreciated, and the painting has been ordered.” (R.J. Evans to Wurster, Oct. 22, 1947, CED.)

In addition to natural fading of the exterior paint, changes in modern paint formulas have altered the original exterior colors and general appearance of Stern Hall. This is particularly evident in degree of reflectivity of the new paints. Re-painted masonry surfaces are more reflective than the original hydraulic cement coating, and re-painted metal surfaces are less reflective than the earlier lead and oil-based paint cover.

Exterior character-defining features:
- Massing and roofline
- balconies, overhangs, and trellises
- doors
- windows
- balcony rails, security screens
- painted board-form concrete
- copper gutters and flashing
- paint scheme
- access between interior and adjacent outdoor spaces
Exterior character-defining features include the original massing; roof silhouette, overhangs and cut-outs; and materials: painted board-form concrete and copper gutters and flashing, original glazed and solid doors, operable windows, trellises, balcony rails, security screens, and the original paint scheme. Particularly significant is the visual and physical access between interiors and adjacent outdoor spaces, a precursor to “outdoor living” that would become wide-spread in post World War II residential architecture.

The exterior of the original Stern Hall is architecturally significant and consequently highly sensitive to change. One exception is the original Service Wing at the north end of the building, which has been substantially altered. The 1959 Addition, designed by Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons to closely follow the original design in spirit and materials, is also significant and sensitive to change. The 1981 Addition is still less than fifty years old and, by definition, is not considered to be historically significant at this time. Although not part of the historic resource and therefore not regulated by the same environmental and historic preservation requirements as the rest of the building, the 1981 Addition was carefully designed to be harmonious with the earlier parts of the building. Alterations to the 1981 wing should be carefully considered.

Change to the Stern Hall exterior should be avoided. In such cases where alteration cannot be avoided, such as changes necessary for security or universal access, work should comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and be designed to allow future removal without damage to original materials.

Figure 1: 1942, Original covered entry walk with walled garden on right. Looking west.
Roger Sturtevant, photographer.
Figure 2: Original Entry. Looking West. Original walled garden was demolished and the area is now used for parking. (EL)

Figure 3: ca. 1948, view of Public Wing west terrace and balcony, and glazed main stair tower.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.
Figure 4: Glazed Stair Tower between Public Wing and Original Bedroom Wing. Looking East. (EL)
Figure 5: South elevation of Original Bedroom Wing on left and west elevation of 1959 Addition on right. Looking northwest. (EL)

Figure 6: West elevation of the 1959 Addition on left, Entry and north elevation of the 1981 Addition on right. Foothill Student Housing (green building) can be seen beyond. Looking east. (EL)
**Interior**

The Stern Hall interiors embody a number of design features characteristic of William Wurster’s residential architecture. Large over-scaled windows provide abundant natural light and open the interior spaces to the natural landscape and views. Adjacent outdoor space captured by roof overhangs, trellises, and balconies adds a sense of spaciousness to the interior rooms and increases the amount of usable space. A limited palette of simple, common materials is used throughout the building, and ornament is minimal. Vertical grain Douglas fir plywood, a common and inexpensive material, is used for the interior doors, cabinets, wall paneling, and trim in all parts of the building. Lights are recessed boxed ceiling lights or simple spun brass fixtures with glass globes. As on the exterior, color is boldly employed on the interior to diminish the institutional character of such a large building and to enhance the effect of natural light.

According to Sally Carrighar, writing for the *Architect and Engineer* shortly after the building opened:

> The unconventional use of color is apparent almost as far as the building can be seen, for various parts of it are colored differently, with brush coats in blue, linen, and terra cotta. Other colors in the trim, and tiles, and metal trellises for eventual vines add their sparkle to the exterior. But it is on the inside that the profusion of colors is most striking.

> The floors in the social rooms are black, an effective background for the giant panda rugs and for the scarlet carpet on the stairs. In the girls’ wings, the floors are [terra cotta] red. Chartreuse is conspicuous, also yellow, a glowing blue, and a subtle red. At right angles to the north[east] bank of windows in the drawing-room [Living Room] hang a series of drapes, like vertical fabric louvers, each in a different brilliant color. The dining-room is red and blue.

> It is difficult to separate the architecture and furnishings, for they seem to have been planned together. The decorator was Mrs. Frances Elkins of Monterey who worked with Mr. Wurster on the Yerba Buena club at Treasure Island. The dormitory shows the same kind of imaginative collaboration.

> Most of the furniture is in the light shades between blonde and cinnamon, with black accents, as in the grand piano. There is much shiny tin, hand-wrought in Mexico, in screens and in the giant – truly giant – lighting fixtures. Bright tile tubs for plants are also huge. Other tile receptacles for cigarettes would be measured in feet rather than inches. In the “beau parlor” the windows are covered with black voile curtains, and black and white chintz drapes. The floor, too, is black, the furniture red and white.
A mere list of these brilliant elements sounds as if the dormitory were staggering. But the color is so skillfully balanced with an abundance of space and light that the effect is stimulating, certainly, but in most ways lovely. (Carrigher, 1942: 20)

The light stain wood finish specified for the Living Room, Library and Beau Parlor walls, bedroom wardrobes, and the cabinets and interior doors throughout the building was achieved with a quinault driftwood oil stain wiped off across the grain and lacquered.

**Service Wing**
A mostly one-story Service Wing at the northern end of Stern Hall was approached from a service drive and court that separated deliveries and service traffic from a formal drive and entrance higher on the hill.

An entry on the west side of the Service Wing led through a number of small rooms: the student waiters’ bath, dry storage, utility and janitor’s closets, walk-in refrigerators, servants’ dining room, garbage room, and a small kitchen office, to a large open Kitchen with skylights at the south end of the Service Wing. Two doors on the south wall connected the Kitchen to the Dining Room, and the Public Wing. A dumbwaiter on the east side of the doors connected the Kitchen with a Kitchenette above, serving the Living Room and Entrance Court Garden.

**Changes:**
The ground floor of the Service Wing has been significantly altered. Some change occurred in 1959 under Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons and again in 1981 when Marquis Associates altered the Kitchen and expanded the Dining Room to the north. Even more substantial change took place when the Foothill Student Housing was constructed and the Stern Hall Service Wing was altered to accommodate new, shared facilities.

While the second floor Kitchenette remains largely intact, some alterations have taken place. The original black-stained concrete floor is intact, and the original plywood cabinets remain with their original finish and hardware. The dumbwaiter cabinet remains, though painted, and the apparatus that connected it to the Kitchen below has been removed. The original square hopper windows on the north wall are intact, but the door from the Living Room, once matching and flush with the wood panel walls, has been replaced with an accessible metal door. Panic hardware has been added to the exterior door to the Entrance Terrace. Surface-mounted electrical conduit and fire sprinklers have been installed at walls and ceiling.

**Character-defining features:**
- Kitchenette black concrete floor
- Kitchenette windows
- Kitchenette cabinets with original finish and hardware
- Immediate adjacency between Kitchenette and Living Room and Kitchenette and Entrance Terrace

No character-defining features remain intact at the ground floor level of the original Stern Hall Service Wing. Consequently, these spaces are not sensitive to change. At the small second floor area, the original features of the Kitchenette that remain intact are character-defining and sensitive to change. These include the original black concrete floor, hopper windows, stained Douglas fir plywood cabinets and hardware, dumbwaiter cabinet, and wood closet (once accessible from the exterior). Also significant and character-defining is the immediate adjacency to the Living Room and to the Entrance Terrace.

Figure 7: Area of original Service Wing, altered to enlarge Dining Room. Looking southeast. (EL)
Public Wing
The Public Wing is a two-story rectangular structure built into the hill (with a small, one-story office wing attached on the east). High interior spaces are organized around a central two-story lobby with a formal entry from the east at the upper level and a secondary entry at the lower floor from the west. A large, open circular stairway links the two floor levels. Large public rooms are located north of the lobby on both floors, the Living Room at the upper level and Dining Room on the ground floor. South of the lobby, a large Games Room fills the remainder of the ground floor. On the floor above, the Entry Lobby Balcony continues to the south as a double loaded corridor with two small public rooms – the Library and Beau Room – on the west, and restrooms and a small office suite on the east.
**ENTRANCE LOBBY**

Formal entry to the building was from a long covered walkway that sloped down from the Entrance Drive loop to the glazed front doors. A small window allowed surveillance of the walkway and entrance from the Office Suite. The roof of the walkway was cut away above the entry, allowing maximum natural light through the doors and high glazed transom. The Entry doors opened onto a wide balcony at the upper level of a two-story Lobby. Double height windows on the west wall opened the Lobby to more natural light and Bay views.

A wide floor-to-ceiling opening at the north end of the Entrance Lobby Balcony led to the Living Room. The Balcony continued toward the south as a double-loaded corridor of the same width, terminating at glazed doors to the Main Stair Tower.

Walls and ceiling were painted plaster. Floors were originally polished concrete, stained black and carpeted only at the circular stair. The original stair carpet was scarlet.

The Balcony’s simple, thin iron guardrail curved and continued as the handrails for the wide circular stair that connected the Balcony with the lower level. A single large round blue metal post near the bottom of the stair supports the Entry Balcony above. A glazed door in the lower panel of one of the two-story high windows on the west wall leads to the Terrace and paths to the campus. Double doors on the north lead to the large Dining Room and on the south to the large Games Room.

Artificial light for both levels of the Lobby is from oblong glass globe light fixtures that hang from long cords in clusters of three and five in the corners of the Lobby. These more formal fixtures diviate from the simple utilitarian fixtures used throughout the rest of the building.

> We have a contract with Phoenix Day Co. to furnish the lighting fixtures [in the Entrance Lobby] and we should order these now. The office has carefully studied these and we have so placed the outlets that the effect is to be casual – rather than focal. The lighting fixtures in the stairway will be two in number and placed in the corners. With this in mind I think the fixtures will be large enough. Then in the Entrance Hall we have three outlets which we have kept as ceiling outlets so that the six fixtures will be sympathetic. (Wurster to Elkins, March 9, 1942)

**Changes:**

On the east wall of the lower Lobby, a shallow, arched niche was constructed to receive a small mural by the famous Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera (1886-1957). The mural, entitled, “Still Life and Blossoming Almond Trees”, and the marble-topped bamboo sideboard below it, were moved to Stern Hall from the Atherton home of Rosalie Stern in 1956, following her death.
Rivera had painted the fresco in a similar shallow niche at the Stern’s home during the Spring of 1931 when Rivera and his wife, Frida Kahlo, were houseguests of Rosalie Stern. Rivera had recently completed a large mural, “Allegory of California” at the Pacific Stock Exchange Building in San Francisco and was scheduled to begin another large mural at the California School of Fine Arts – now the San Francisco Art Institute.

The Stern mural portrays three young children reaching into a basket of fruit. Behind them, under blooming almond trees, three men work the soil with hand tools, and in the distance a man drives a tractor. Three of the figures are portraits of Rosalie Stern’s grandchildren. The blonde girl and boy in the foreground are Rhoda and Peter Haas and the kneeling figure is their older brother, Walter. (Rhoda Haas would later be among the first residents of Stern Hall).

After the death of her mother, Rosalie’s daughter (and mother of the children), Elise Stern Haas, arranged through William Wurster to have the mural and sideboard moved to Stern Hall. Mrs. Haas first suggested placing the mural above the fireplace in the Stern Hall Living Room, but with guidance from William Wurster, agreed to its current location at the campus-side entry to Stern Hall. In September 1956 Wurster wrote to Karl Kasten, of the Berkeley Department of Art, who was in charge of moving the mural.

   Mrs. Sigmund Stern left a Diego Rivera fresco to Stern Hall. This fresco is in the house in Atherton and it is understood that it is on an iron frame and so can be removed. Mrs. Walter Haas, Mrs. Stern’s daughter, and I have gone through Stern Hall and Mrs. Haas has chosen a place for it in the lower stair hall. This has my enthusiastic concurrence. (Wurster to K. Kasten, Sept. 10, 1956. CED)

The mural was moved without mishap, in large part because Rivera had executed the Stern Mural, like many of his other works, on a steel frame designed to allow future relocation. In addition, the methods for its removal, support, transport, and re-installation were thoroughly specified in documents developed by Professor Kasten and John Takeuchi from the UC Office of Architects and Engineers. These specifications are now part the Wurster Collection in the CED Archives.

Mrs. Haas suggested painting the sideboard that would be installed below the mural, as it was in Mrs. Stern’s Atherton home, but this never happened.

   …I am glad you feel that the furniture from my mother’s dining-room can be used at Stern Hall. My only reservation is that I do not feel that the yellow lacquered bamboo of the sideboard would look well in Stern Hall. I think to paint it black would be a great improvement. Inquiries could be made as to whether this is feasible and not too expensive. (Mrs. Walter A. Haas to Wurster, Oct. 10, 1956. CED)
A 1982 restoration of the Stern mural by Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff and Stephen Dimitroff, who assisted Rivera on murals in Detroit and New York,

…revealed that Rivera completed the [Stern] work in eight work sessions, each portrait requiring one session, but he was able to cover much more area at one time in the less difficult landscape areas. However, possibly owing to weather conditions or to Rivera’s spending too much attention on his hostess and her friends, the upper left area dried too rapidly and the colors did not adhere permanently. (Hurlburt 1989: 110-111, 274)

During restoration, the defective area was stabilized and a clear plexiglas sheet was placed over the niche to protect the mural from dust or vandalism.

Other changes to the Lobby have been limited to alterations to the openings into adjacent rooms, new finish materials, and replacement of some broken lights.

The wide floor-to-ceiling opening between the Entrance Lobby and the Living Room was only recently enclosed with glazed double doors and transom. Historic photographs show a similar floor-to-ceiling opening between the Lower Lobby and the Dining Room, though transparent double doors always filled the lower portion of this opening. These doors were replaced with single-lite wooden doors and the transom was plastered. Panic hardware was added at the exterior doors. A door in the east wall of the Lower Lobby that led to an excavated storage room was sealed and plastered over when the Rivera mural and sideboard were installed. The storage room is now accessed through a similar storage space to the north.

Today, the original black-stained concrete floor is exposed only at the edge of the spiral stair treads. The Balcony and stair have been covered in a dark rolled carpet and the lower floor is covered in a tan glazed ceramic tile.

Damaged glass globes have been difficult to replace. As early as 1948 Wurster wrote,

I just talked to Mr. Roller of Phoenix Day who furnished the glass globes in the Stern Hall entrance hall. Unfortunately they are no longer being made. When he inquired last the manufacturer had destroyed the mold: … incase you want to try to prevail on them to make a new mold: Kott Glass Co., Swissvale, PA. The glass was known as 12”x 17”x 6” (fitter size) units. The units were made in clear, inside frosted and opal glass. (Wurster to Lois Goetz, Nov. 15, 1948. CED)

Today a number of original sling-back leather chairs – probably from the Living Room – are positioned against the Balcony guardrail. This is an effective method for keeping people away from the balcony rail, which does not meet current standards for height or spacing.
The use of this space has changed, since the original entry doors on the west, facing downhill towards the campus, are no longer used as a main entrance, considerably decreasing the foot traffic through the lower entrance lobby space.

**Character-defining features:**
- two-story space
- exterior access at both floor levels
- exterior glazed doors
- windows
- stair and rails
- blue column
- mural and sideboard
- light fixtures
- Visual access between Entry and Living Room and Entry and Balcony

Character-defining features of the Entrance Lobby include the two-story volume that can be entered at both floor levels. Original glazed exterior doors and windows and the abundant natural light and views they provide are integral to the historic character of the space. The open circular stair, bent iron guardrail and handrails, round blue structural column, and hanging glass light fixtures are all character-defining physical features and highly sensitive to change. The black-stained concrete floor is character-defining and should be retained where intact.

Adjacencies and unobstructed views are also significant. These include views through the Entry doors down the entrance path on the east, from the Entry into the Living Room, and views to the Stair and lower Lobby. Equally significant is the view from the upper level through the large windows on the west to the exterior Balcony and Terrace, and campus and Bay views.

As the work of an important artist, the Diego Rivera is highly significant. Along with the accompanying sideboard, the mural is also significant because of its association with the original donor, Rosalie Stern.
Figure 9: ca 1955, Stern Hall Entry Lobby looking north through large opening into Living Room.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.

Figure 10: Spiral Stair and west (campus) entrance at Lower Lobby. Looking southwest. (EL)
Figure 11: Lower Lobby with Diego Rivera Mural, blue structural column, and new doors to Dining Room. Looking northeast. (EL)

**THE LIVING ROOM**

The most significant and intact of the public rooms, the Living Room features elements characteristic of William Wurster’s residential design. Over-scaled grouped window on the east and west open the space to views and natural light. Adjacent outdoor space is captured as additional usable space and expands a sense of spaciousness on the interior. Common materials are frankly expressed and there is a lack of ornament.

The high-ceilinged room is rectangular in plan with long walls on the east and west. A low-ceilinged window bay projects beyond two large square columns on the west, opening the room to a panoramic Bay view.

A simple, unadorned fireplace centered on the north wall bows gently into the room. The fireplace surround is black-tinted cement plaster with a fine sand finish. The floors are polished black-stained concrete and the hearth is polished black terrazzo. The Living Room walls are paneled in light stained vertical grain Douglas fir plywood. East of the fireplace, a flush door matching the paneled walls, led to a Kitchenette connected by a dumbwaiter to the Kitchen below.
[In the Living Room, the interior designer, Frances] Elkins created a palette of monotones, strategically highlighted by touches of color, texture, and hand-wrought tin surfaces. She paneled the walls..., specifying a honey-colored patina for the lounging chairs and low parsons-style coffee tables. Like the chairs, the tables were partially covered in dark-tan rawhide. Additional texture came from several [black and white] spotted cowhide rugs anchoring the furniture groupings, which included comfortable sofas and armchairs. The sofas and armchairs were uniformly upholstered in a neutral-hued herringbone weave created by [the noted textile designer.] Dorothy Liebes. Pillows in solid red, yellow and blue accentuated each sofa and echoed the fabric used for the opaque curtains screening a second span of full-length windows overlooking the Berkeley foothills. (Salny 2005: 136)

Artificial light was provided by cove lighting above the opening to the projecting bay. “It was our thought that the cove lighting is so located that the light would not reflect in the glass which looks out toward the city and bridge lights.” (Wurster to Mrs. Stern, Nov. 24, 1941. CED Archives). Oversized glazed ceramic table lamps, and floor lamps, and two hand-wrought tin and glass fixtures mounted on the east wall provided additional light for the room.

Adjacent usable exterior space included a wide Balcony running the full length of the Public Wing on the west and a walled garden on the east. The light wire mesh guardrail allowed maximum views from a seated position in the Living Room.

Changes:
The room and its original furnishings are largely intact, although some features are missing, notably the black and white cowhide rugs – reported stolen during the 1969-1970 academic year (Rook Thomas 2008), – table lamps and floor lamps, standing ashtrays and planters, tin folding screens, and throw pillows. The brightly colored curtains have been replaced with neutral colored fabric, and most seating has been reupholstered. Metal radiator enclosures, originally painted to match the plywood walls are now painted white.

A 1915 portrait of Mrs. Stern by Hamilton (This should be verified as the signature is not clearly legible.) hangs above the fireplace, replacing the original large mirror framed in hand wrought tin that now hangs on the south wall.

Fire sprinklers are concealed in a surface-mounted trough near the top of the walls. Round recessed ceiling lights, smoke detectors, emergency lighting and exit signs are prominent additions. The large unframed opening between the Lobby and the Living Room was enclosed with glazed double doors and transom. This has diminished the connection between the two spaces and affected the quality of light in both rooms. The walled Entrance Court garden on the east side of the Living Room was destroyed and is now a parking area.
Character-defining Features:
- direct access to Balcony on west and exterior on east, Kitchenette on north and Entry on south
- exterior glazed doors
- windows
- wood wall paneling with original finish
- black-stained concrete floor
- fireplace and hearth
- tin light fixtures and cove lighting
- original furniture
- mirror and tin frame
- portrait
- Visual access between Living Room and Entry

The once-panoramic view to the west has been diminished by the construction of tall buildings on campus, and the view to the east was significantly altered by the construction of Foothill Student Housing and changes to the Entrance road and parking. However, those views that remain and the natural light from the high windows on the east, the window bay on the west, and indirect light from the Entry Lobby are important character-defining features of the Living Room, as are the intact windows and glazed exterior doors.

The original finishes: the stained plywood paneling on the walls, black-stained concrete floor and fine sand finish fireplace surround, and terrazzo hearth are character-defining features and sensitive to change. The cove lighting above the bay window is also a character-defining feature.

All of the original furniture and furnishings are character-defining features. The portrait of Mrs. Stern above the fireplace, though added later, is significant for its association with the donor, Mrs. Stern. (Further research is needed to determine if the portrait is significant as the work of an important artist.)
Figure 12: 1942, Stern Hall Living Room with Frances Elkins Interior, looking north.  
Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.

Figure 13: Living Room with portrait of Mrs. Stern over fireplace. Looking Northwest. (EL)
Figure 14: Living Room, looking southeast toward original walled garden area on left (now parking) and through new glazed doors to Entrance Lobby. (EL)

Figure 15: View of Campanile from Living Room and Balcony. Looking west. (EL)
**BEAU PARLOR**

Near the Main Entry, just south of the circular stair, was the Beau Parlor, a small waiting room for male visitors. The room, entered from the Lobby Balcony had direct access through a pair of glazed doors to the exterior Balcony. The furred ceiling was lower than in the larger public rooms. Floors were black-stained concrete, and walls were paneled in light-stained vertical grain Douglas fir plywood like the walls of the Living Room. Two wooden closets built into the east wall were the same light-stained plywood. A metal radiator enclosure was painted to match the walls.

**Changes:**
The room now functions as a small administrative office. None of the original furnishings survive. Walls and closets have been painted white and the tinted concrete floor has been carpeted.

**Character-defining Features:**
- direct access to Balcony
- exterior glazed doors
- windows
- wood wall paneling
- black-stained concrete floor
- wooden closets

The paired glazed doors to the exterior Balcony providing natural light and air and views to the west, as well as direct access to the exterior are important character-defining features. The original plywood wall paneling and closets, though painted, remain important features of the room. The original black-stained concrete floor, if intact below the carpet, would be considered character-defining and sensitive to change.

**LIBRARY**
The Library at the southwest corner of the Public Wing was entered from the second floor corridor and, and like the Living Room and Beau Parlor, had direct access to the exterior Balcony through two sets of glazed double doors that open the room to natural light and air, and campus and Bay views. As in the Beau Parlor, the lower furred ceiling gave the room a more residential scale than the large public rooms. The floors were polished black-stained concrete and the walls were paneled in light-stained vertical grain Douglas fir plywood, matching the Living Room and Beau Parlor walls. Built-in bookshelves, also light stained vertical grain plywood, with locking glass door fronts lined the north and east walls.
A simple, red Roman-brick fireplace was centered on the south wall. White plaster half-shell light fixtures flanked the fireplace. These light fixtures were similar to ones designed by the Swiss sculptor, Alberto Giacometti (1901-1941) that Frances Elkins imported, sometimes copied, and often specified in the interiors she designed.

A specially designed Stern Hall bookplate can be found inside the cover of many of the books, which reportedly include a significant collection of French Literature donated by a member of the Stern family.

Chairs and a hide-covered coffee table currently found in the Library appear to be original Stern Hall furnishings, but may have been moved here from another room. A watercolor that hangs on the west wall, signed by Wm. A Gain, (or Gan – signature is not clearly legible.) and dated 1939, may be an original furnishing.

Changes:
The room has changed little, but the plywood-paneled walls and bookshelves have been painted white, and the original black-stained polished concrete floor is now carpeted. Fire sprinklers and recessed light fixtures at the ceiling have been added. A print (48/127) by Sara Wallach (imp.) 1971, dedicated “in memory of Mrs. F., Housemother (1969-1977)” now hangs above the fireplace.

Character-defining Features:
- direct access to Balcony
- exterior glazed doors
- windows
- brick fireplace
- wood wall paneling
- glass-front wooden bookcases
- black-stained concrete floor
- original furniture
- plaster light fixtures
- book collection
- framed art on walls

The glazed doors to the Balcony, that provide natural light, views and direct access to the exterior are significant character-defining features. The brick fireplace, and glass-front wooden bookcases and wall paneling, although painted, are character-defining features. If intact below the carpet, the original tinted concrete floors would also be a character-defining feature. All the original furnishings, including furniture, plaster light fixtures, art, and book collection are character-defining features, although more research is needed to verify which of these is original to this room.
Figure 16: Library with Giacometti light fixtures flanking fireplace and glazed bookshelves at left. Looking South. (EL)

Figure 17: Stern Hall Library book plate on light-stained Douglas fir shelf. (MRC)
**Administrative Offices**

On the south side of the main Entry was a suite of rooms that included administrative offices, a student store, phone booths, and restrooms. No historical photographs of this portion of the building were found while preparing this report, but the original drawings show this space entered through a wide opening between the “Gallery”, or main corridor, and the “Office Alcove”. There were three phone booths along the south wall and a “Powder Room” on the east. Behind a low counter stood the “Student Store” and Office. An exterior window and annunciator on the north wall allowed surveillance of the Main Entrance from the Office. On the south side of the Office, against the exterior east wall was a small “Director’s Office”. A “Men’s Room” and small room labeled “Unassigned Space” were entered near the south end of the Gallery. A skylight centered on the wall between the Powder Room and Men’s Room lit both spaces.

**Changes:**

While the use of this space has changed little, alterations have occurred. New partition walls were added and doors relocated. The large “Powder Room” and “Men’s Room” were replaced with smaller accessible toilets entered from a skylit vestibule with student mailboxes and a copy machine. The stained concrete floors have been carpeted, and a new metal roll-down door seals the wide opening to the main corridor. A second surveillance window was cut in the exterior wall, near to the Main Entrance.

**Character-defining features:**

- exterior windows

Because this area has been altered, it is less sensitive to change. However, original exterior windows are sensitive to change.

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Figure 18: Surveillance windows at Entry. Only the square opening and copper leader are original elements. Looking south. (EL)
LOWER LOBBY
(see Entry Lobby above.)

THE DINING ROOM
The Dining Room is a large, high ceilinged space with two square concrete structural columns dividing the main dining space from a glazed bay on the west. The bay matched the footprint of the Living Room bay above it, and filled the room with natural light through floor-to-ceiling height windows. Additional, indirect light came from the south, through a wide, floor-to-ceiling opening to the lower Lobby. Glazed double doors filled the lower part of the opening that was otherwise unenclosed.

The room was artificially lit by boxed recessed ceiling lights arranged in a random pattern. Exposed structural beams painted white to match the ceiling, rested on columns painted blue to match the walls. A four-inch band at the base of the walls and columns were painted dark charcoal to match the stained concrete floor. Red doors led to the Kitchen on the north and two Storage Rooms built into the hill on the east. The northernmost storage room was fitted with built-in wooden shelves for linen and dish storage. The bold paint scheme was augmented by colorful curtains and furniture.

“Glossy-topped parsons-style tables in dark blue, set without tableclothes, filled the dining room, serving as the foundation for the profusion of custom-made Victorian-style chairs with fan shaped splats. The robin’s-egg-blue-framed chairs were upholstered in a woven coral red, pink, and white wool, contrasting with the dark-charcoal hue of the polished bare concrete floors…” (Salny 2005: 139)

The small square tables accommodated only four chairs and provided a home-like and less institutional eating experience for the women at Stern Hall.

Changes:
Unfortunately, none of the original furniture remains in place, and the colorful paint scheme has been painted over; walls, columns, doors and metal radiator enclosure are now white. The stained concrete floor is covered in rolled carpet.

Alterations to the room included enlarging the window bay in 1959 and again in 1981. These alterations maintained the views and physical connection between the Dining Room and the Terrace. But today, security alarms and hardware prevent direct access to the exterior.

Changes to the north wall reflect major alterations to the spaces beyond. The original doors to the Kitchen were relocated and a metal roll-down door was added at the wide opening to the
Dining Room addition, now a separate TV room. The upper portion of the north wall projects into the Dining Room, accommodating a large mechanical duct.

Visual connection between the Dining Room and Lower Lobby was lost when the upper part of the floor-to-ceiling opening was filled and wooden doors replaced the original glazed doors. On the east wall, a third door was added to the storage rooms.

Fluorescent light fixtures now hang from the ceiling. Electrical conduit is surface mounted on the walls and a wooden shelf and speaker was mounted high on the wall near the lower Lobby doors.

Some casement windows on the west appear to be warped and do not close properly. In addition, the window hardware may be undersized for that location and purpose. Water damage is evident in the plaster high on the west end of the north wall.

**Character-defining Features:**
- direct access to Terrace
- exterior glazed doors
- windows and projecting bay
- black-stained concrete floor

Though altered, a character-defining feature is the window wall of the projecting bay on the west, the views, natural light and air it provides, and the physical connection to the Terrace. If intact below the carpet, the original stained-concrete floor would be character-defining.

Figure 19: 1942, Stern Hall Dining Room with Frances Elkins Interior, looking west.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.
Figure 20: ca 1955, Stern Hall Dining Room with male student waiters, looking south through glazed doors and clear transom into lower Lobby and wall where Rivera Mural would be installed in 1956.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.

**GAMES ROOM**

The Games Room is a large high-ceilinged space at the south end of the Public Wing. Two concrete structural columns near the center of the room divided the space into three bays aligned with three large openings in the west wall. A pair of glazed doors and tall transom windows filled each opening and provided natural light, air, and views, and direct access to the adjacent covered terrace.

Double doors on the north wall led to the Lower Lobby, and another a set of doors (probably glazed) led to the main Stair Tower on the south. At the north east corner of the room a small vestibule projected to the east. The original floor plan shows four doors leading from the vestibule to two telephone booths on the north, a small “games closet” on the east, and a large room labeled “Unused Area” on the south. The “Unused Area” was built into the hillside under the Office Suite and was nearly equal in size to the Games Room. Two structural columns centered in the space aligned with the columns of the Games Room.
The floor was black-tinted concrete, as they were throughout the Public Wing. Walls were painted concrete with evident impressions from 4 x 7 foot plywood sheets used in the concrete forms.

Lights with simple bent sheet metal shades on the west wall and the concrete columns may be original to the room. Radiators situated near the east ends of the north and the south walls appear to be original.

**Changes:**
Doors added on the east wall may to lead to a “Television Room” added in a portion of the “Unused Area”. This space was inaccessible during the survey.

The glazed doors to the terrace are intact, but both end pairs have been nailed shut and the central pair is alarmed, preventing direct access from the Games Room to the adjacent Terrace. Doors to the Lower Lobby and to the Main Stair Hall have been replaced with leaves of unequal width. The original doors would have been of equal width, and the doors leading to the Main Stair Tower were probably glazed, like the other doors leading into the stair area.

The black concrete floor is now covered with a glazed ceramic tile on the east side of the room and rolled carpet on the west. The walls adjacent to the ceramic tile floor have a matching tile base, while those adjacent to the carpet have a dark vinyl base.

Acoustical tiles and recessed fluorescent lights have been added to the ceiling. Electrical conduit and outlets are surfaced mounted on the concrete walls.

The furniture is probably not original to the room, although a set of seven attached upholstered seats may date from near the time of construction. Other furniture includes a large pool table and ping-pong table, a wooden cue stick rack mounted high on the west wall, and an upright Wurlitzer piano. A modern stainless steel drinking fountain and three large vending machines and an ice machine are lined against the east wall.

**Character-defining Features:**
- direct access to Terrace
- exterior glazed doors and transoms
- windows
- painted concrete walls
- bent metal light fixtures

The character-defining features of this room are the original glazed doors and transoms on the west and the visual and physical connection between indoor and adjacent outdoor space. The
painted concrete walls and the bent sheet metal light shades, if original, are character-defining feature.

**STAIR TOWER**
The main Stair Tower at the intersection of the Public Wing and the Bedroom Wing provides a transition between the high-ceilinged two-story Public Wing and the four-story Bedroom Wing with low floor-to-ceiling heights. The tower meets grade on the west at the level of the Public Wing’s lower floor, and on the east, half a flight up, at the level of the Bedroom Wing’s second floor.

The stair is concrete and runs against the solid east wall. On the west the stair is open, supported on a painted steel column, and held about five feet clear of the west wall. The west wall of the Stair Tower is entirely glazed, providing abundant natural light and views. Painted steel channels and pipes support the window wall and divide it into five bays each four windows high. A glazed exterior door fills the lowest panel at the north end, adjacent to the Public Wing. At the base of the glass wall, on the interior is a deep concrete planter box.

The room was quite colorful. The concrete floors and stair were stained a terra cotta red. The ceiling and soffits of the stair runs and landings were painted blue similar to the exterior walls. The concrete walls, door and window frames, and trim were painted a different blue. (The south wall may have been painted a red similar to the exterior walls.) Guard and handrails constructed of flat steel bar rails and one-inch steel pipe balusters were originally painted in enamel that was similar, but a lighter red than the floors.

All of the doors were originally glazed and similar like the existing doors at the first floor of the Bedroom Wing that are wired-glass double swinging doors with “Residents only” stenciled in black letters on the glass.

**Changes:**
A small vestibule in the northeast corner of the Stair Hall serves as a small lobby for an elevator tower added in the early 1980s.

The stair and concrete floors have been painted numerous times a color similar to the original terra cotta stain. Wide non-skid black tape has been applied to some treads. The bottoms of the walls are painted a terra-cotta red like the floors, while the walls themselves are now white. Guardrails and handrails are painted a royal blue (originally these were red) and steel column is a lighter blue.

Except for the first bedroom floor doors, described above, all interior doors have been replaced and panic hardware has been added to the exterior doors.
Electrical conduit is surface mounted to the walls. Artificial light is provided by small rectangular wall-mounted fluorescent fixtures.

**Character-defining Features:**
- glazed west wall
- exposed steel frame
- glazed exterior doors
- windows
- original interior doors with stenciled lettering
- rails
- concrete planter
- concrete floors
- historic paint scheme

Character-defining features include the glazed west wall and exposed steel frame, and the abundant natural light and views. The original doors with stenciled lettering, the metal rails, the concrete planter, and the historic paint scheme are all important character-defining features.

Figure 21: Original Stair Tower interior, viewed from exterior Balcony. Looking southeast. (MRC)
Figure 22: Detail of bent iron rail in Original Stair Tower. (EL)

**ORIGINAL BEDROOM WING**

The original Bedroom block has a U-shaped plan with a four-story base (on the east) and two three-story wings (that project downhill to the west). The base is laid out with a single-loaded corridor and rooms on the west. The wings have central double-loaded corridors with rooms on the north and south. The corridors are continuous through the block.

Stern Hall’s Main Stair tower, just north of the Bedroom block, serves as primary vertical circulation. There is a second stair at the southwest corner of the block, and a narrow, steep stair to the fourth floor at the southeast corner. All of the stairways are well lit with natural light from operable windows. A small elevator near the northeast corner of the Bedroom block was Stern Hall’s only elevator until the 1980s.

The Bedroom block originally housed 90 women in 66 bedrooms: 42 single occupancy and 24 double occupancy rooms. Bathrooms and support spaces (Laundry Rooms, Trunk and Storage Rooms, Linen Storage, and Maid’s Dressing Room and Lavatory) were concentrated on the lower floors and toward the east and north ends of the building, leaving the better light and views on the west for the bedrooms.
A small social space (the Browsing Room) was placed at the center of the building on the ground floor. This was adjacent to the Bedroom Courtyard, an outdoor room between the projecting wings. A small Kitchenette on the north side of the Browsing Room served both gathering spaces.

An apartment for the Resident Director with a bedroom, living room and private bath was on the small fourth floor.

There are two large bathrooms on each of the full floors and a small one on the fourth floor. The bathrooms include individual shower stalls (usually three), toilet stalls, sinks (against the exterior walls), a small bathtub room, and wood framed mirrors. In addition, each student had her own wooden locker in the bathroom. Multiple hopper windows provided adequate light and ventilation.

A limited palette of simple, sturdy, and commonly available finish materials and fixtures were used throughout the Bedroom Wing – and many of these were used throughout Stern Hall.

Floors were polished concrete, stained a terra cotta color and wood baseboards were painted to match the floor color. Bathroom floors and wainscot were covered in ceramic tile. Vertical grain Douglas fir plywood was used for all of the doors, cabinets, shelves and trim – all finished in the light stain typical throughout Stern Hall. Windows were limited to a few types and sizes. These were large double-hung windows with low sills at each bedroom and square hopper or awning windows at corridors, bathrooms, and service rooms. All of the windows were operable. Glazed doors at the exterior balconies were sized to provided adequate daylight to the double loaded corridors and avoid the need for artificial light during the day.

The bedroom interiors were uniformly finished. Built-in wardrobes and shelves lined the inside (corridor) wall, providing storage and buffering noise from the corridor. The other walls were plastered and had a continuous picture molding slot.

Several pay phones at each floor were located in small plywood-lined closets fitted with a wooden shelf and chair. Doors, also Douglas fir and similar to the other interior doors in the Bedroom Block, were fitted with small windows and top and bottom vents. The doors provided some acoustical privacy while allowing air to circulate.

There was additional built-in cabinetwork and bookcases at the Browsing Room and Kitchenette, and in the Resident Director’s apartment.

The simple light fixtures used throughout are spun brass with six-, eight- or ten-inch opal sphere or bowl covers.
Changes:
Changes to the original Bedroom block have been limited. The original Maid’s Dressing Room and Lavatory and original Laundry rooms were altered to accommodate multiple coin-operated washers and dryers operated by the residents themselves.

The Kitchenette equipment was removed. Payphones too have been removed from the telephone closets, which are now used as custodian closets or for storage. Only some of the original wood paneling and telephone shelves are intact, but most of the doors with windows remain, although the vents have been sealed with aluminum plates.

Glazed swinging doors to the Main Stair Hall have been replaced with solid doors except at the ground floor, where the original doors remain. Locking hardware has been installed on most of the original bedroom and storage closet doors. Smoke detectors, sprinklers, emergency lighting, exit signs, and metal conduit have been surface mounted on the concrete walls and ceilings.

Accessible door hardware has been added in some locations, particularly at the bathrooms, and some bathroom fixtures have been replaced. New soap and paper towel dispensers are attached to the walls.

The original terra cotta stained concrete floors have been covered in vinyl or rolled carpet and the wood baseboards are covered with vinyl. Ceramic tiles in some bathrooms have been patched or replaced. Some of the original Douglas fir cabinetwork, doors, and trim have been painted, but most appear to be intact and retain the original light stain finish.

Character-defining Features:
- windows
- exterior glazed doors at end of corridors
- direct access to Balconies from corridors
- natural light and ventilation to all rooms including corridors and stairs
- interior woodwork: wardrobes, cabinets, shelves and bathroom lockers, with original finish and hardware
- interior wood doors with original finish and hardware
- telephone cabinets with wood doors, wall paneling and shelves with original finish and hardware
- terra cotta-stained concrete floor
- original light fixtures

Character defining features of the original Bedroom block include the original operable windows (double-hung, casement, and square awning and hopper windows) and glazed doors; and the natural light and ventilation they provide at corridors and stairs. All of the original woodwork
executed in vertical grain Douglas fir plywood finished with a light stain – typical throughout Stern Hall: doors, wardrobes, shelves, cabinets, lockers, telephone booths, and trim, as well as the original hardware and light fixtures are important character-defining features.

While it may not be practical to retain all of the abandoned telephone booths, it is recommended that at least one be preserved in its original state.

Figure 23: ca 1955, Stern Hall typical double bedroom with polished concrete floor, paired large double hung windows with low sills and wire mesh security screens, and continuous picture rail slot on plaster walls.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.
Figure 24: Detail of original wood cabinets, hardware, and light fixture at original Bedroom. Original spun brass light fixture is intact, but the original round globe has been replaced. (MRC)
1959 DORMITORY ADDITION

A simple four-story addition designed by Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons was built in 1959 on the south side of the original Bedroom block. The interior is laid out along a central corridor that runs north-south. Six double-occupancy bedrooms per floor (24 total) are positioned on the west side of the corridor, and bathrooms, stair, and service spaces are on the east. The corridor extends beyond the footprint of the building at the north to tie into the circulation of the original Bedroom block. The floor plan is essentially repeated on every floor, but Custodian closets (with mop sink and floor drain) on the first and fourth floors, are replaced by small Laundry rooms on
the second and third floors. The layout of each bedroom is identical to that of the double-occupancy bedrooms in the original Bedroom block.

Interior finish materials also repeat those used for the original Bedroom area. The Douglas fir wardrobes and shelves in the bedrooms differ from the originals only in the type of hardware used – flattened U-shaped bronze pulls.

Windows too follow the patterns established with the original design. Paired large double hung windows with low sills and wire mesh security screens are centered on the west wall of each bedroom. Square awning and hopper windows light the bathrooms and service rooms, stair landings, and a portion of the corridor. The windows are operable.

Vertical grain Douglas fir plywood is typically used for the interior doors and in the telephone closets on each floor.

**Changes:**
Little change has occurred in this wing. As in the original Bedroom area, the telephone closets have been abandoned and are currently used for storage. Floors have been carpeted and some of the stained Douglas fir has been painted. Smoke detectors, fire alarms and magnetic door holders were installed throughout the building.

**Character-defining Features:**
- windows
- natural light and ventilation to all rooms including corridors and stairs
- interior woodwork: wardrobes, cabinets, shelves and bathroom lockers, with original finish and hardware
- interior wood doors with original finish and hardware
- telephone cabinets with wood doors, wall paneling and shelves with original finish and hardware
- plaster walls with continuous picture molding slot at bedrooms
- terra cotta-stained concrete floor
- original light fixtures

Character defining features in the 1959 Addition include all original operable windows and the natural light and air they provide to all spaces; the Douglas fir doors, cabinet work (including telephone booths), and trim with the original light stain finish; plaster walls in the bedrooms with a continuous picture molding slot; and original light fixtures.
Figure 26: Detail of wood cabinets and hardware at Bedroom in 1959 Addition. Pulls are different from those in the original Bedroom Wing. (MRC)

Figure 27: Detail of original wood cabinets and hardware at Bathroom. (EL)
1981 Addition

In 1981 a four-story addition by Marquis Associates was built south of the 1959 Addition. The main body of the new building is a rectangular block sited perpendicular to the 1959 Addition and organized around a T shaped circulation plan. In the cross bar of the T is a two-story lobby and main stair, and a four story glazed corridor that ties into the 1959 Addition. The leg of the T is a long double-loaded corridor. The main entry to the building is from the west at the ground floor level. A secondary entry is on the east at the second floor level.

The building added 55 double-occupancy bedrooms, bringing the total occupancy of Stern Hall to over 250 women. The bedrooms are arranged along the north and the south sides of the central corridor and in three- and four-bedroom suites at the east and west ends of the building. Ceilings are lower than in the historic Bedroom blocks and some spaces, most notably the central corridor and bathrooms, require artificial light and mechanical ventilation.

The addition was designed to be harmonious with the earlier building, but is unapologetically a building of its own time and constrained budget. It is wood-frame construction. Interior finishes are typically gyp-board walls and ceilings, with carpet or resilient flooring, and ceramic tile at the bathrooms. Stairs are metal with steel pipe handrails and guardrails.

The design makes clear references to some element of the historic buildings including a two-story entry lobby with access to the exterior from each floor level, and a glazed link to the 1959 Addition (recalling the glazed Stair Tower between the original Public Wing and Bedroom Wing), glazed exterior doors with access at different levels, window types linked to the internal use (double hung windows at bedrooms and square windows at bathrooms and utility spaces), painted steel pipe guard and handrails, and the prominent round blue structural column at the Lobby (similar to the column in the lower Entry Lobby of the original Public Wing).

Character-defining Features:
- windows
- glazed south wall at main stair
- glazed corridor linking 1981 Addition with 1959 Addition
- Two-story entry lobby with exterior access from west at first floor level and from east at second floor level
- painted steel pipe guard and handrails at interior stair and lobby
- round metal blue column at entry lobby

The 1981 Addition is less than 50 years old and is therefore not considered to be part of the historic resource. Nevertheless, those features, listed above, that specifically refer to elements of
the original Stern Hall, are compatible with the original building and 1959 addition and are therefore sensitive to change.

Figure 28: Glazed Corridor between 1959 Addition and 1981 Addition. Looking west. (EL)
Figure 29: South elevation of 1981 Addition showing continuation of window pattern established in the original building: double hung windows at bedrooms, square windows at bathrooms and large glazed areas at stairs and communal spaces. (EL)
SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Prior to the Construction of Stern Hall

Stern Hall is located on a hill that rises steeply east of the central campus. The building is sited north of the Greek Theatre and toward the southeast corner of Gayley Road and Hearst Avenue. Before the construction of the building, the site, which falls away steeply toward the west and more gently toward the south, was undeveloped and covered with various types of grasses and a stand of mature eucalyptus trees that extended south to the Greek Theatre. (The trees had been planted sometime during the latter decades of the 19th century [Taylor and Butterfield 2003:116].) The location of the site provided for a panoramic view – south to downtown Oakland, across the bay to San Francisco and the Golden Gate, and north to Mount Tamalpais in Marin County. In the foreground were clear southwest and westward views to Sather Tower (the Campanile), the Hearst Memorial Mining Building and Circle, and the campus beyond.

Changes to the site as a result of the construction of Stern Hall included alterations to the original topography when the site was graded for the building and the removal of a large portion of the grove of eucalyptus trees to clear the site for construction. However, after the construction of Stern Hall, the site retained its original character – a predominant slope toward the west and large eucalyptus trees in place above the site (to the east) and to the south (between Stern Hall and the Greek Theatre).

Figure 30: ca. 1930, Aerial photograph of the UC campus northeast corner, shows heavily wooded future Stern Hall site directly above Hearst Memorial Mining Building. Hearst Avenue (at left) is unpaved above Gayley Road.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library (assumed)
Figure 31: 1939, Aerial photograph of the UC campus and surrounding city of Berkeley, shows future Stern Hall site in the wooded area north of the Greek Theatre site (near top right of image).


**Stern Hall Landscape (1942-1943)**

Several factors were critical to the layout and design of the landscape for Stern Hall. First, there was the character of the site. The topography and views afforded by this location were key components of the organization of the building and its related outdoor spaces. Wurster was drawn to the sloping topography and informal character of the site with its eucalyptus trees and “uncared-for grassy slope.” He described the importance of the site to John Gregg, in a letter (dated 13 July 1942) and explained that he decided to “embrace the grades, irregularities, and scattered trees – to at no time attempt to make a flat plateau type of building” (Wurster 13 July
1942). This was a sharp break with the campus tradition of siting permanent buildings in a rectilinear arrangement, on natural or artificial terraces, although it did reflect the siting aesthetic of some of Wurster’s campus predecessors. Bernard Maybeck integrated his Faculty Club (1902) with a natural, sloping, creek side site, and even John Galen Howard designed several campus buildings such as North Gate Hall (1905) and the Naval Architecture building (1913) – although none of his permanent, Beaux Arts structures – to integrate with the natural landscape and topography.

Because of the orientation of the Stern Hall site’s slope and its views, the public rooms of the building were contained in one block with the main entrance to the building on the upper side of the slope (east side of the building) so that it was protected from the prevailing winds. This also allowed Wurster to site the automobile parking further up the slope (to the east), in a convenient but inconspicuous location. The public spaces within the building (living room, dining room, etc.) were oriented to provide for views and to maximize light (Wurster 25 September 1950). Two of the three outdoor-living spaces (Dining Room Terrace and Bedroom Terrace) were located on the west side of the building (providing views and sun).

A second influence was Wurster’s modernist approach to the building’s interface with the landscape. He incorporated adjacent exterior spaces as extensions of the building to provide both a visual connection and physical access to the landscape. On the Stern Hall site, these included level terraces adjacent to the building’s entry, its dining room, and the bedrooms. The building was designed so that there was a direct visual connection between the structure and the site, and Wurster intended that there be no foundation plantings that would hide this connection or camouflage this interface (Wurster 13 July 1942).

The fact that Stern Hall was a women’s dormitory was another crucial factor that influenced the design of the landscape. From her initial involvement in the dormitory, when it was envisioned as housing for men, Rosalie Stern said that she wanted to “do something very interesting and unique as a contribution to the lives of students on campus” (Nichols 1937). When the project evolved into housing for women, Stern carried this desire forward in wanting to create a modern women’s residence that was comfortable and home-like rather than institutional in character. This desire to create a living space suitable for women probably led to the inclusion of floral designer Isabella Worn who had considerable experience in the planting design for large residential gardens and estates. These settings were more similar to what Stern (and Wurster) wanted to create in Stern Hall’s garden spaces than that found in a typical dormitory. Worn was able to take the framework or structure of the landscape that Wurster had created (he designed the grading, circulation, and other hardscape features of the site) and to develop a planting scheme that unified the site and that provided the desired residential character to the plantings at
the entrance and in the outdoor-living terraces. Worn’s arrangement of the plants was rather formal (to complement the lines and massing of the building) and her choice of plant materials created a plant palette that was Mediterranean in character (i.e., olives, Lombardy poplars, clipped plane trees, oranges, etc.).

Vehicular circulation included: (1) a looped entrance road, with parking, to the east of the building; (2) a service road that linked the south end of this entrance road to the service areas located in the ground floor of the Bedroom Wing; and (3) a short service road from Hearst Avenue to the “service court” for the one-story service wing on the north end of the building.

The primary pedestrian circulation paths included: (1) the covered entrance walkway (paved with red brick) from the entrance road to the front door on the east side of the building; (2) a sidewalk and steps (concrete) to the south end of the Dining Room Terrace that provided an entrance from the west (i.e., from the campus); (3) a sidewalk and steps (concrete) that provided an entrance from the west to the Bedroom Terrace; (4) a sidewalk (probably concrete) aligned north-south and located just west of the Bedroom Wing that provided access along the west side of Stern Hall; (5) paths and steps on the slope west of the building that led to Gayley Road (these may have originally been unpaved with wood steps [Norton 1950]).

There were three outdoor-living spaces next to the building.

1. Walled Garden and Entry Terrace: The covered entry walkway and the area under the overhang in front of the living room were paved with red brick. There was a walled garden (the walls were, at least in part, red brick) located next to the building and to the north of the entry walkway. This area is labeled as “paved area” on the 1942 “Planting Plan” but the material is not specified (but is stippled to look like gravel). There were planting beds around the south, east, and north perimeter of this area. The beds had a dwarf boxwood edging (Buxus sempervirens ‘Suffruticosa’) and were planted with marguerites (Chrysanthemum frutescens; these come in a variety of colors; no color was specified). Valencia oranges (Citrus sinensis) were planted in the south and east beds. “Clipped” plane trees (Platanus orientalis) were planted across the front (on the street side) of the wall along the east side. This more formal treatment of the plane trees was repeated along the wall of the building to the north of the garden.

Each of the planters at the base of trellis poles were planted with three types of vines: a combination of Clemantis [armandii with white flowers, ‘Henryi’ with white flowers, or jackmanii with purple flowers], a star jasmine (Trachelospermum jasminoides, with yellowish white sweet-smelling flowers), and Vitis capensis (an evergreen grape whose current scientific name is Rhoicissus capensis) or a combination of clemantis, star jasmine, and Lamarque rose (a climbing rose with whitish-yellow flowers).
2. **Dining Room Terrace:** The covered terrace next to the Dining Room and the west entry area were paved with red brick. The pavement extended around a long rectangular lawn area. Each of the planters at the base of trellis poles were planted with a combination of two or three types of vines (of similar varieties as described for the main Entry Terrace, on the east). There were groups of plants at either end of the terrace. Plants in the bed at the north end of the terrace included six plane trees and a mass of marguerites. Plants at the south end included four “clipped” plane trees set in the pavement, and dwarf Meyer lemons (*Citrus meyeri*) and standard fuschias (“a variety”; these were not specified) in the beds next to the building; the ground plane in these beds was planted with heliotrope (variety not specified) and Pelargonium (“in variety”; these were not specified). The sloped bank to the west of the level, paved terrace was planted with a mass of agapanthus; a low hedge of *Ligustrum henryii* was planted along the top of the slope and extended around the outer side of the planting bed on the north side of the terrace.

3. **Bedroom Terrace:** There was a patio (paved with red brick) located at the top of the slope in the east end of the space formed by the three sides of the Bedroom Wing. The paved surface of the patio extended to the concrete walls of the building. There was a southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) planted in a cut-out in the pavement on the north side of the patio and a Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra* “Italica”) in a similar cut-out on the south side of the patio. A wood wall located along the west side of this patio screened views into this area. In the planting bed between the wall and the edge of the patio pavement were three flowering hawthorne trees (*Crataegus carriere*) and a mass of azaleas (“donated varieties”).

Olive trees (*Olea europaea*) were planted in rows around the building: (1) three rows to the north of the walled garden on the east side of the building; (2) two rows south of the covered entrance, on the east side of the offices; (3) in a single row along the east, west, and south sides of the Bedroom Wing; (4) three rows on the slope west of the Bedroom Terrace; (5) in a row at the base of the slope on the west side of the Dining Room Terrace. This created the effect of the building being located within an olive grove or orchard.

Lombardy poplars were used to designate the edge of the property along Hearst Avenue and to line both sides of the entrance drive.

The ground cover around the building was grass.
Changes to the Landscape in 1951

There were changes to the landscape along the slope west of the building in 1951 as part of a 1950 project to improve the functioning of the intersection at Gayley Road and Hearst Avenue. The slope (northwest corner of the Stern Hall site) at this intersection was slightly reduced, trees (predominantly Monterey pine with a few California live oaks) were planted in a swath in the open area between the Dining Room Terrace and Gayley Road, and the wooden steps that led from Stern Hall to Gayley Road were replaced (Norton 1950 and University of California, Office of Architects and Engineers, Berkeley, California 1951). As these new trees grew, they altered the appearance of the open grass hillside that had originally provided the setting for the west side of the building. This was the beginning of a gradual infill – either with built features or in this case trees – that decreased the space around the building and by the early 1990s, with the completion of the Foothill Student Housing complex, resulted in the loss of much of the open, naturalistic setting that originally was a part of the design for the Stern Hall landscape.

A double row of plane trees was added to the lawn area at the Dining Room Terrace (University of California, Office of Architects and Engineers, Berkeley, California 1951). There were
similar trees located in the bed at the north end of the terrace in the 1942 planting plan, and the
new trees may have been clipped to match these (although this was not specified on the 1951
plan). The trees also reflected the use of pollarded plane trees in the central part of the campus,
where they were first used on the Campanile Esplanade and later in several other landscape
locations.

In addition to these trees, a larger variety and quantity of ornamental plant materials were added
to the grounds around Stern Hall. Some of the new varieties may have been to replace plants
that had died since the original installation in 1943 (i.e. variegated ivy, clemantis, and wisteria
vines in the planters for the trellises along the east side of the building and on the Dining Room
Terrace). However, much of the new vegetation did not follow Wurster’s vision for the
landscape or the intent of the 1942 planting plan by Worn. The extensive addition of ivy for
groundcover on the slope east of the Bedroom Wing and on the hillside next to Gayley Road is
probably the most obvious example; this change may have been done to address maintenance but
the shiny dark green ivy looked very different than the seasonal color changes that occurred with
the grass. Other additions included: (1) planting ceanothus along the new paths on the west
hillside; (2) adding flowering plum trees on the south side of a new (proposed) path on the south
side of the Bedroom Wing; (3) adding various varieties of junipers to the parking island and
along the portions of the entry drive on the east side of the building; and (4) adding a hedge of
yedda hawthorne (*Crataegus carriere*) at the west edge of the Dining Room Terrace that
extended around the Service Court (to the north) (University of California, Office of Architects
and Engineers, Berkeley, California 1951). In general, these changes resulted in the addition of a
greater variety of ornamental plants around the building, and the addition of the ivy and shrubs
decreased the amount of grass in the landscape.
Figure 33: ca. 1950s, Stern Hall viewed from the west soon after the 1951 planting undertaken by UC in relation to improvements at Gayley Road and Hearst Avenue. Shows how the addition of olive trees, etc. affected the relationship of building to site.

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.
Figure 34: 1957, Aerial photograph of the western edge of the UC Campus, shows Stern Hall prior to construction of the first Stern Hall addition (1959), by Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons.

Source: Pacific Aerial Survey. 1957.
Changes to the Landscape from the 1959 Addition

In 1959, a four-story Dormitory Addition was added to the southeast corner of the original Bedroom Wing. This addition was similar in design to the original and was set back slightly from the east face of the original building; thereby extending Stern Hall to the south and forming a slightly curved façade along the east side of the building. No landscape plans associated with this 1959 addition were located. The construction of this wing required the removal of mature eucalyptus trees and was part of an ongoing and incremental process that, with each successive building project in this part of the campus, reduced the size of the historic eucalyptus grove in this area that was a character-defining feature of the campus during the late-19th and early-20th centuries. The construction of the 1959 Dormitory Addition also required the removal of the olive trees that had been planted along the south face of the original Bedroom Wing in 1943. There were no other immediate alterations to Stern Hall’s key landscape features or characteristics.

A concrete retaining wall was added at the base of the slope on the east side of the 1959 addition; this wall was located a few feet away from and parallel to its east side.
Figure 36: 1959, Aerial photograph of the UC Campus western edge, shows the 1959 Stern Hall addition under construction.

Figure 37: ca. 1960s, Stern Hall viewed from the west. Large research buildings have been constructed on the hill above Stern Hall, but eucalyptus trees to the southeast are still in place (these would be removed with construction of Foothill Student Housing in the late 1980s).

Source: University Archives, Bancroft Library.

**Changes to the Landscape from the 1980 Addition**

In 1980, a second, four-story Dormitory Addition was built on the south end of the 1959 Addition and was sited perpendicular to the contour of the hill and roughly parallel to the south side of the original Bedroom Wing. The construction of this new wing resulted in the creation of an outdoor space that was enclosed by this wing on the south, the 1959 addition on the east, and the south side of the original Bedroom Wing on the north. This area was similar in shape but larger than the area within the original Bedroom Wing. However, unlike the original building there was no terrace or outdoor space that provided an interface between the interior of the building and the landscape and that extended the living area into the landscape. Landscape features within this area include:

1. An entrance to the dorm in the southeast corner of the “C” (near the intersection of the 1959 and 1980 additions) that includes a small landing (red-colored concrete with brick dividing strips) and a set of steps (concrete with pipe handrail) that lead down an asphalt-paved walk and to the west-side entrance drive and parking lot. This drive was added, at some point after the 1980 addition, to provide vehicular access from Gayley Road to this
new entrance, and over time the irregular-shaped parking lot’s size expanded so that today, it dominates the space defined by the C-shaped dormitory wings.

2. Low concrete retaining walls to accommodate grade changes next to the building.

3. Vegetation including shrubs that have been planted next to the building’s foundation, grass, and olive trees.

A concrete sidewalk was added on the east side of the building to provide access to the new entrance. Concrete gutters located a short distance from and parallel to the east and south sides of the building were added.

The topography of the site was altered to accommodate construction of the building.

While the 1980 addition with its new entrance road and the associated parking lot did not alter the key landscape features of the original Stern Hall, they contributed to both the loss of eucalyptus trees (that were cut down to accommodate construction) and the loss of the landscape setting around Stern Hall (by adding new built features into the landscape).

The various flowering trees and ivy planted along the slopes next to the 1980 Stern Hall Addition were probably added after the construction of the Foothill complex. Although, they follow the planting changes instituted with the 1951 planting plan (by the University), they alter Wurster’s intent for the character of the landscape that surrounded Stern Hall – one with tall eucalyptus trees and “native” grasses.
Figure 38: 1994, Aerial photograph of the UC Campus northeast corner, shows Stern Hall with the 1981 addition by Marquis Associates, and surrounded on three sides by the Foothill Student Housing.

Source: University of California, Berkeley, Earth Sciences and Map Library Online Aerial Photos.

Changes to the Landscape From the Foothill Housing Complex (1989-1991)

The construction of the Foothill Student Housing complex in 1989-1991 brought about the greatest change to the Stern Hall site. These multi-story housing blocks closely surround Stern Hall on three sides (north, east, and south). As a result, rather than being set in a naturalistic hillside, Stern Hall’s setting is now dominated by the Foothill complex, and there is no clear distinction between the landscape associated with Stern Hall and the surrounding campus buildings. The construction of the Foothill complex required the alteration of topography (east and south of Stern Hall) and the removal of eucalyptus trees (to the southeast of Stern Hall).

The location and configuration of the entrance drive and parking lot on the east side of Stern Hall were changed. This resulted in the removal of the walled garden on the east of Stern Hall. Also,
the lawn and trees that were located to the north of the walled garden were removed. Today, the entry drive and parking are located immediately next to Stern Hall.

The area between Stern Hall and the Foothill complex was graded to create a terrace and new pedestrian circulation features (sidewalks, steps, and ramps); seating, lighting, and vegetation were added.

The beds and associated plants along the north side of the Dining Room Terrace and the lawn and trees north of Dining Room Terrace were removed. Today, the Dining Room Terrace is connected to the concrete paving that was added as part of the Foothill complex. The spatial organization, design, and symmetry associated with the Dining Room Terrace were changed by this connection to the new paving and by the Foothill buildings that surround the north end of the terrace.

**Other Landscape Changes**

The panoramic view from Stern Hall (to Mount Tamalpais, the Golden Gate, the Oakland City Hall, and the rest of the campus) has been reduced over time as the University developed the eastern edge of the central campus with higher buildings. The area north of Stern Hall changed from a quiet residential quarter to a dense mix of residential and large institutional buildings. As the campus grew, and as a “second campus” of what is now the Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory developed in the hills above Stern Hall, traffic on Gayley Road and Hearst Avenue increased. These routes were no longer backwater streets primarily carrying limited neighborhood traffic, but busy commute thoroughfares.

Pedestrian and vehicular circulation and parking has changed to accommodate increased automobile, service vehicle, and foot traffic. Accessibility standards have also required changes to the site and the building. For example, the addition of ramps on the west side of the Dining Room Terrace has resulted in the removal of the hedge, row of olive trees, and the mass of agapanthus that were originally planted on this slope.

**Character-Defining Site Features**

The death of plant materials over time, the additions of new varieties and locations of plants in 1951, and most particularly, the addition of the Foothill Student Housing complex have contributed to alterations in the original landscape for Stern Hall as designed by Wurster and Worn.
Remaining character-defining site features include the following:

1. The downhill, sloping topography to the west of the building (between Stern Hall and Gayley Road), that frames views from, and towards, Stern Hall.

2. Main Entrance: (a) the covered entrance walkway (brick); (b) covered brick terrace along the east side of the building, adjacent to the Living Room; (c) planters at the base of trellis poles.

3. Dining Room Terrace: (a) the red brick terrace next to the Dining Room and the red brick west entry area; (b) long rectangular lawn area; (c) sidewalk along the west side of the lawn (asphalt pavement is new); (d) planters at the base of trellis poles; (e) planting beds at the south end of the terrace and three square planting areas in the pavement (there were originally four of these); (f) the sidewalk and steps (concrete) and retaining walls at the south end of the Dining Room Terrace.

4. Bedroom Terrace area: (a) Brick patio (paved with red brick); (b) southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) planted in a cut-out in the pavement on the north side of the patio; (c) wood wall located along the west side of the patio; (d) slope with grass and olive trees (although several of the olives are nonextant so that the original pattern of the rows is no longer evident); (e) the sidewalk and steps (concrete) that provide an entrance from the west to the Bedroom Terrace; (f) low concrete retaining walls.

5. Some of the pedestrian circulation features: (a) the sidewalk and steps (concrete) to the south end of the Dining Room Terrace that provide an entrance from the west (i.e., from the campus); (b) the sidewalk and steps (concrete) that provide an entrance from the west to the Bedroom Terrace; (4) the sidewalk aligned north-south and located just west of the Bedroom Wing that provides access along the west side of Stern Hall (the asphalt paving may be a new material); (5) some of the paths and steps on the slope west of the building that lead to Gayley Road.

6. The service road and concrete retaining walls on the east side of the building that connects to the ground floor of the Bedroom Wing (this drive is shorter in length than when originally built);

7. Remnants of the olive trees in various locations around the building.
HISTORY OF STERN HALL

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY OF STERN HALL

The construction history of Stern Hall falls into several phases. The earliest phase from 1937 to 1939 has to do with the initial concept, the evolution and development of the concept as a men’s dormitory on a site near Bowles Hall, and rejection of the site for seismic reasons. The second phase from 1940 to 1942 has to do with the redesign of the project as a women’s dormitory on a new site, preparation of the site, construction of the building, and implementation of a landscape plan. The third phase, from 1955 to 1959, has to do with the planning, design, and construction of an addition to the original building. The fourth phase, from 1979 to 1981, has to do with the planning, design, and construction of a second addition. The fifth phase, beginning with the construction of Foothill Student Housing in 1989, has to do with the permanent alteration of the setting by new construction to the north, east, and west of Stern Hall.

Initial Concept and False Start, 1937-1939

On 19 November 1937, Rosalie M. Stern offered to donate $250,000 to the University of California to build a men’s dormitory. (Corley 1941: 1) On 2 December 1937, in the company of Luther A. Nichols, the Comptroller, Mrs. Stern visited “the proposed dormitory sites back of Bowles Hall . . . She seemed tremendously pleased with the possibilities, it fortunately being a clear, sunny afternoon which lent emphasis to the beauty of the view.” She also told Nichols “not to be concerned if she seemed to move somewhat slowly in the development of her plans as she was anxious to do something very interesting and unique as a contribution to the lives of the students on the campus.” (Nichols 1937a)

Establishing a pattern of detailed involvement that she would maintain through the entire development of the project, Mrs. Stern studied aerial photographs, maps, a profile of the site, and a plot plan in choosing a site. (Nichols 1937b) Then by 17 January 1938, she had visited dormitories at Cal Tech, Pomona, Scripps, Stanford, William and Mary, Johns Hopkins, and Yale for ideas.

To choose an architect, she first asked her brother, Eugene Meyers, owner of the Washington Post. Meyers telephoned the well-known New York architect, Harvey Wiley Corbett, perhaps because Corbett was a graduate of the University of California. By early February 1938, Mrs. Stern asked the University to choose either Corbett or Wurster as architect. (University of California. Board of Regents. Grounds and Buildings. 11 February 1938) Corbett later wrote to William W. Wurster:
The only men I knew in San Francisco intimately were the older group of my own time, so I suggested Arthur Brown or John Bakewell. He said he knew these men personally, but that his sister wanted a younger man with a more modern approach to the architectural problem. I then telephoned Mr. Howard Myers, Editor of the “Architectural Forum”, asking for suggestions and illustrations if he had them of the work of the more modern men in San Francisco. He sent me quite a collection, and in reviewing these illustrations I was very much pleased with the character of your work. It impressed me as having a very rational modern approach, of which I am greatly in sympathy. I sent your name through to Mr. Meyers, with the recommendation that you should do the work.

A week or so later, Mrs. Sigmund Stern came to see me. I again recommended to her that I was entirely satisfied you could do an excellent job, and I thought the matter was closed; however, as the affair has developed it is apparent that she still wants me in the picture. I am naturally interested as a native son of California and graduate of the University, but happen to be exceedingly busy at this end of the line so that the time I could spend in California is rather restricted. (Corbett 1938)

In discussing its agreement with the architects, the University first wrote to Corbett:

In order that there may be a resident architect on the job, it is proposed that Mr. Wm. Wuster [sic] of San Francisco be associated with you in this project. I have already discussed the matter with Mr. Wuster [sic] and find him to be enthusiastic and wholly cooperative in the matter of working out an association agreement. I am therefore sending him a copy of this letter in order that he may communicate with you or you with him, in working out the detailed arrangements....

It would also be advantageous if preparation and execution of the plans could be carried on through a local office, and Mr. Wuster is in a position to provide these facilities. It is Mrs. Stern’s desire that the preparation of the preliminary design of the building be made by you in consultation with Mr. Wuster. (Nichols 1938a)

Thus, the formal arrangement appeared to put Corbett in charge at a time when the University was not sufficiently familiar with Wurster to write his name as it was spelled, instead writing it as it was pronounced.

With the architects engaged but the site not yet official, the project and Mrs. Stern’s donation were publicly announced at Charter Day exercises on 24 March 1938. (Berkeley Gazette 1938) In fact the architects were certain enough about the site behind Bowles Hall that Wurster and his draftsman Floyd Comstock began work on preliminary plans to show Corbett on 5 April 1938. (Corbett 1938)
In May, more of the design team was assembled as Wurster requested approval from the Regents to hire A.V. Saph, Jr. as structural engineer and G.M. Simonson as mechanical engineer. (Wurster 1938)

The first major problem in the project arose once the plans were complete and costs were estimated showing “an excess of cost over funds available amounting to approximately $50,000.” These were shown to Mrs. Stern in a meeting with Wurster and President Sproul on 20 May 1938. On 8 June 1938 Sproul wrote to Mrs. Stern to say that the Regents could put in $25,000 for utility connections and landscaping plus “the cost of preparing the site and constructing roads to it.” For the remaining $25,000, he offered three options to cut costs: “adopt a less ‘rambling’ plan,” “elevate the game room”; or “redesign the structure for a smaller number of bedroom-study-bedroom suites and a larger number of individual study-bedrooms.” (Sproul 1938)

On 19 August 1938, Mrs. Stern responded with an offer to donate an additional $35,000 to stick with the plans and not eliminate any features. In arriving at this decision she noted that the project had reached a milestone, that it was time “to sign the architect’s contract” and to present the plans “to the Regents for final approval.” (Stern 1938)

The Committee on Grounds and Buildings of the Regents approved the plans at a meeting on 8 October 1938 “and directed the Comptroller to have the final drawings prepared and the bids taken.” The plans were for a men’s dorm

to house 99 students, most of them in suites of two bedrooms and a study, a few in double bedrooms and combined studies and a few single rooms. In addition, there are special suites for the manager and the President of the dormitory or an advisor. The building has, in addition to the usual living and dining rooms, a den, a games room, and special rooms for social functions. (University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1938)

In addition, to clarify the roles of the architects and the Supervising Architect of the University — Arthur Brown, Jr. who had been hired in May of 1938, two months after Corbett and Wurster were in conversation about the job —

The Committee informed the Supervising Architect that it is usually the custom of the Regents to submit plans for buildings by other architects to him for study and comment to be sure there is no clash with other University architectural plans, but in this particular case the matter had gone forward before he was appointed. Mr. Brown stated, from a hasty glance at the plans, that in his opinion no difficulty would result from this new type of architecture at this location.” (University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1938)
The second major problem arose in January 1939 when the University wrote to inform Mrs. Stern about the results of test borings at the proposed building site. These showed the possibility that the site may be on an ancient slide area . . . and if further investigations proves this to be the case, special consideration will have to be given to the foundation development. (Nichols 1939)

The increased building costs of these conditions were presented to the Regents 17 June 1939, estimated to be between $100,000 and $200,000 more.

It was the sense of the Committee that no additional expense should be incurred at this site and that the President should discuss the matter with Mrs. Stern and try to persuade her that the site was not an appropriate one. (University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1939)

By the end of July 1939 the original site was abandoned. As early as May, Wurster had walked around the hill with Mrs. Stern thinking about where else they could go. In a letter to Corbett on 31 July 1939, Wurster wrote that his preference was for the proposed site of the women’s dorm being developed by the Alumni Association under the leadership of Walter Haas (Mrs. Stern’s son-in-law). Both architects were disappointed because they thought the first site was the best and because they were pleased with the design. Corbett wrote:

I felt that we had a very unique, sensible and well coordinated plan with a unique solution of the dormitory problem made possible by the extreme slope of the site, and it is hard for me to see how we can get quite so satisfactory a solution in the new location, which is relatively narrow and which doesn’t give the opportunity for the setback terraces which the steeper slope gave so beautifully. (Corbett 1939)

Wurster expressed his frustration “I have declared all the work done to date is practically lost.” (Wurster 1939)

The project was stalled until a new site could be chosen which in turn was dependent on ground conditions. On 4 December 1939, the University wrote to Wurster with information about several possible sites still under consideration. (Nichols 1939) Then on 13 December 1939, a long-awaited assessment of the ground conditions was sent to the University by George D. Louderback, a professor at the University and a consulting geologist. Speaking about the proposed site of the Alumni Association women’s dormitory Louderback wrote:

geological evidence indicates that little or no active fault movement has taken place in recent-time and the reasonable expectancy is that it will be free from the
risk of future fault displacements (although not free from the risk of strong earthquake shock. (Louderback 1939)

Regarding the first proposed site of the Stern men’s dorm, he wrote:

The belt of active fault displacements for many centuries up to the most recent movements, traverses the area covered by the ground plan of the proposed Stern Dormitory, and the reasonable expectancy is that future movement for some time to come will be in or next to this belt.

The presence of a recently operating belt of movement of a major active fault introduces a definite hazard for any structure built over such a belt. (Louderback 1939)

On 11 January 1940, the Alumni Association relinquished the site it had proposed for a woman’s dormitory. (University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1940) On 12 January 1940, the Regents offered the former site of the Alumni Association’s women’s dorm to Mrs. Stern and asked her to consider changing her project from a men’s dorm to a women’s dorm. (Wurster 1940) As President Sproul wrote to her: “I have been requested, however, without pressing the matter, to ask you to consider the desirability of constructing a women’s dormitory rather than a men’s. Thus it is said, a desirable equality between the advantages of the sexes upon the campus would be preserved, and the natural disappointment of the alumnae in the loss of the desirable site allotted to them assuaged. I transmit this suggestion to you for such consideration as you may care to give it.” (Sproul 1940) Mrs. Stern was reluctant at first to change her mind, but in July 1940, she agreed to build a women’s dorm. (Wurster 1940)

During the year of delay in 1939 some progress was made that set the stage for renewing work in 1940. Much of this had to do with the working relationships between Mrs. Stern and both architects. When she visited Corbett in New York in January 1939 he took her to see the Terrace Club at the World’s Fair for ideas about details, and she worried about “minor things.” (Corbett 1939b) After this visit Wurster wrote to Corbett:

…Mrs. Stern came back from the east with such a different viewpoint on this office that I have been pondering ever since as to just how you worked this miracle. There was more trust in us – more personal liking and consideration – I no longer dreaded the conferences. And so it has remained through all this delay, which has been trying to her. (Wurster 1939)

Design and Construction, 1940-1943

Once the new site became available another issue had to be resolved before work could begin again. In the agreement between Mrs. Stern and the University, it was the University’s
responsibility to prepare the site, build roads, and connect utilities. The roads in the area were not as they are today, although the two streets closest to the building site — Gayley Road and Hearst Avenue — were the same. As Supervising Architect, Arthur Brown prepared a plan of the east end of the campus with new proposed routes for the relocation of Gayley Road, also called the Cross-Campus Road, through the area. Two proposals for viaducts linked Piedmont Way west of Memorial Stadium with Hearst Avenue: the Highland Avenue alternative curved between Bowles Hall and the Greek Theater and met Hearst at the foot of Highland Avenue; the Central Alternative ran east of Cowell Hospital west of the Greek Theater and met Hearst at the foot of La Loma Avenue. A third proposal, the College Avenue Alternative connected an existing extension of College Avenue north of Bancroft Way to the north end of the Central Alternative. (Brown 1940) The University chose a modification of the Central Alternative that used the existing alignment of Gayley Road as much as possible; this would “keep the contour of the ground in order to eliminate the viaduct, reduce the amount of cut, and take the road further from the Greek Theater.” (Weaver 1940) Adopting this plan resulted in only minor modifications to the area near the new dorm site, but it was an essential first step.

At this point, planning for the project proceeded as a men’s dorm. On 30 March 1940, Mrs. Stern wrote confirming that “I have decided to build a dormitory for men as we originally planned to do.” (Stern 1940)

As planning got underway, Corbett took a more active role. On 19 April 1940, Corbett wrote to Wurster:

... When Mrs. Stern was here she was naturally anxious to get on with the work of the Dormitory as rapidly as possible, and she seemed particularly anxious to have me get into it personally to a greater extent than I had been, and with this in mind I have built up a contour model of the new site at 1/16th scale, and am now working on plans of a dormitory, which I will complete in model form, this new model being an adaptation in all major matters of the original plans, which you prepared for the original site.

These new plans are a modification of the original only as they affect the west ends of the two projecting wings where the contour of the land logically calls for a series of story height steps forming attractive terraces and recapturing in principle our original idea of creating a building, the shape of which resulted primarily from adopting the building to the slope of the land.

The other modification which I am submitting for your consideration is the omission of the balconies running past the student rooms.
... You will note in the new development of the plan that all corridors between the student rooms open out on a terrace at their west end from each floor, which will provide an attractive and comfortable space easily accessible where students could enjoy the out-of-doors when weather conditions permit.

The third suggestion, which I have to offer for your consideration is to provide in the wall on the window side of the student rooms a continuing strip of glass brick 18” high located directly under the ceiling slab, thus giving each room diffused light of the most ideal kind. Normal clear glass windows in the rooms would start just below this strip, giving a clear vision outlook for a man standing in the room and would not have to be as large as we formerly provided since as you know the value of any light in a space is determined more largely by the height of the light above the floor than by the square foot area of light (Note the light in any artist’s studio).

In another week I will send you a set of blue prints of plans, elevations and sections, and I may be able to have the model ready to go in about two weeks. I am not making these suggestions in any effort to project my personality into the project, simply offer them for what they may be worth after you have looked them over. (Corbett 1940)

In response to Corbett’s ideas, Wurster wrote back regarding specific points:

It would be with considerable regret I would see the balconies go as I know what it meant to me in my college days to have a balcony on my fraternity house – and I know what it means to me here at the office and at my apartment. Our clear penetrating light, I believe, meets the criticism of reducing the amount of light. Then, too the result might have the bleak look of the Stanford Group.

Just as importantly, Wurster wrote politely but firmly about their process and their collaboration:

It will be interesting to swap ideas for we will send you the ideas we have begun to work on – perhaps ideas from each end will enrich the final scheme.

... We will try to send off our sketches at the end of next week. Perhaps it would seem well to hold final crystallization (such as completing a model for presenting) until all ideas have received consideration that we might have mutual enthusiasm for the scheme which is to be presented to Mrs. Stern. Part of our eagerness to send sketches to you comes from our being on the ground and I have gone by the site often to sense its views - noise – wind – and sun, and this may be a contribution. And, too, the matter of traffic – entrance, etc. are brought by site demands. (Wurster 1940c)
Assuming that the project was underway as a men’s dorm and that there were no further obstacles in the path, the Regents reported in May that bids were expected in September and that the building will be completed and ready for occupancy in August 1941.” (University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1940)

However, after Mrs. Stern agreed to build a women’s dorm instead of a men’s dorm in July 1940, there was yet another delay while consideration was given to what differences this might require in the design. On 6 August 1940 Wurster wrote to the Dean of Women at twenty universities including Cornell, Northwestern, Radcliffe, Mills, and Stanford asking for “opinions and ideas.” (Wurster 1940d) According to Wurster, the “change from men to women necessitated a complete restudy. (Wurster 1940e)

Starting over again seems to have unsettled Mrs. Stern, prompting Wurster to write to Corbett:

Would you send out a letter of reassurance to Mrs. Stern about the last sketches?
In some manner she is all at sea about everything we do – thinks us slow – she seems to have no confidence in our judgement [sic].

Just now she tells me she has cancelled a trip east in order to get the drawings ready for the regents meeting – and today cancelled a meeting with me. All of this is confidential, of course, but it does make it difficult to do anything worth while. Suddenly Mrs. Stern says the Living Room is the wrong proportion – even though it be as the one in the last scheme.

As before, Mrs. Stern’s worries elicited reassurances from Corbett in the form of comments on and explanations about the design. He explained the preference learned from other universities of women for single rooms and he characterized the relocated entrance on the northeast and:

“many minor arrangements all through the plan which give that delicate touch of “home” quality that in my mind has always more significance in a women’s dormitory than in a men’s.” (Corbett 1940b)

Preliminary plans were completed and submitted both to Mrs. Stern and to the University in mid October 1940. Cost estimates were ready on 7 November 1940. Both of these caused additional concern for Mrs. Stern. The cost estimates included $8,095 for the architect’s fees associated with the preparation of their abandoned plans for a men’s dorm, which she thought should not come out of her budget. On the design, Wurster wrote to Corbett:

[Mrs. Stern] doesn’t like our unsymmetrical living Room – etc. etc. etc.

I pointed out that we felt the Living Room to be more interesting this way – it gave a real movement to the view of the Golden Gate and Tamalpais. . . . I want
to get the acceptance of the regents but she says she is not ready to present it as yet – needs to talk it over with her family.

. . . I think it is not the actual scheme which shadows Mrs. Stern – but the delay – the fact that it is a women’s (rather than a men’s) dormitory – the money – . . . . She needs a good stout, enthusiastic word from you that all is well – that the scheme is O.K. (Wurster 1940g)

Wurster also wrote to President Sproul to say: “Mrs. Stern has not been feeling well and I think a little attention from you would be of help at this time.”

The plans were circulated among various parties with interests in the outcome. Mary B. Davidson, Acting Dean of Women said that the plans “give promise of a very beautiful and adequate home for the few women fortunate enough to live there.” She also requested security screens over lower floor bedrooms, wash basins in each bedroom, full length mirrors, and rods in clothes closets high enough for long evening dresses. (Davidson 1940) Also, Corbett wrote favorably to Wurster: “. . . the stair hall in particular the way you have indicated it will be a lovely and appropriate feature, having that subtle quality so eminently suitable to a women’s dormitory.” (Corbett 1940)

Then, by 5 December 1940, Mrs. Stern accepted the plans and asked that they be presented to the Regents for approval. (Weaver 1940) The Regents approved the plans on 13 December 1940 and on 7 January 1941, Wurster was given authorization to “proceed with the preparation of working drawings.” (Corley 1941) During this period there was discussion of the merits of panel heat, a system of radiant heat, and steam heat, a convection system. Despite Corbett’s strong advocacy of panel heat which he had used and was common in Europe, Mrs. Stern accused the architects of “experimenting on her building” and chose steam heat. (Wurster 1941b) When informed of this decision, Corbett wrote to Wurster: “This does not surprise me, because America is still the most provincial and conservative country on earth and resists the advance of new (and better) ideas with the greatest persistence. I am glad you made a try at it nevertheless.” (Corbett 1941)

The working drawings and specifications were completed on 12 June 1941 (Wurster 1941a) The dorm was advertised for bids on 23 June 1941. Bids were received 22 July 1941 with the low bid of $244,625.00 from the K.E. Parker Company of San Francisco. Wurster wrote to Mrs. Stern: “K.E. Parker Co. is a large and skilled company — doing much for the University — (Cowell Hospital — Women’s Gymnasium and the new Administration Building). It is splendid that such an experienced firm is low” . . . Low bidder is probably the best qualified of all the bidders.” (Wurster 1941)
In addition to the general construction bid, low bids were received of $2,207.00 from Ray Winther (a lower bid from Shirar Young was disqualified) for refrigeration, $5,505.28 from Dohrmann Hotel Supply for Kitchen Equipment, and $5,785.00 from San Francisco Elevator Company for elevators. (Wurster 1941)

With the architects’ fees, furnishings, and other costs, there was an overrun of $13,018.28 above Mrs. Stern’s donation amount of $285,000. In addition, the University’s costs including the unanticipated ground investigations and the architect’s fees for abandoned work on the first site, utility connections, site grading, roads, walks, and $5,000 for landscaping were $65,000.00. (Wurster 1941) After identifying items to be deleted, on 15 August 1941 the Finance Committee of the Board of Regents decided to advance the project $13,000 for all those items, to be repaid from future operations of the dorm, making it possible for “the contract to go forward.” (Corley 1941) Thus, the total cost of the project was expected to be $363,000.00.

Construction Begins

On 15 August 1941, Wurster met at the building site with John W. Gregg, professor of Landscape Architecture and others “to make a determination as to which trees are to come out at this time.” (Wurster 1941a) Three days later the work had begun, and by 24 September 1941 “the trees [were] all cut down, the grading equipment at work, the top soil placed on one side, the concrete bunkers were being built.” (Wurster 1941b)

When the K.E. Parker Company won the bid on 22 July 1941, they stipulated that the bid was only good for ten days “because of the quick changes these days in all items” (Wurster 1941) — a reference to the unsettled economy and the war in Europe. On 24 September 1941, the president of the K.E. Parker Company wrote to the University implying that Gilmore Fabricators, the supplier of reinforcing steel, was delaying delivery to get higher prices on the pretext that others had higher priority. Parker suggested that the University ask A.P. Giannini, President of the Bank of America, a Regent, and the principle banker for Gilmore, to intervene. Parker suggested that Giannini’s help plus a bonus on each ton of steel (on top of already rising prices) would result in the delivery.

A related situation was brought to the University on 28 October 1941 when the K.E. Parker Company asked the Regents to assist in the immediate purchase of “certain plumbing and electrical materials that will be needed later in the construction of the building . . . There are indications that unless this immediate purchase is made, it may be impossible to obtain these materials because of priority regulations.” (University of California. Regents. Finance Committee 1941)
A progress report for the period up to 1 November 1941 stated that “the project is definitely behind schedule, but under present building conditions and without Federal assistance it is doing as well as or better than could be expected.” At that point the tree removal and excavation were almost complete, the concrete plant was built, 13% of the concrete form work was complete, and 7% of the concrete work was complete. (Weaver 1941)

Correspondence in November 1941 generally concerned interior details and the involvement of Mrs. Frances A. Elkins, the interior designer chosen by Mrs. Stern. Mrs. Elkins had first been sent drawings of the living room, dining room, beau-parlor, and library on 17 July 1941 (Wurster 1941c). On 19 November 1941, Wurster wrote to Mrs. Stern suggesting black floors which “might allow more latitude in color scheme than terra cotta,” a proposal that Mrs. Elkins approved of. Wurster also wrote about “six electric light fixtures to be designed” and approved by Mrs. Stern and Mrs. Elkins — “three bracket lights in the entrance hall,” “one important fixture in the stair well,” and “two bracket lights at the foot of the main stair.” (Wurster 1941d)

Wurster also wrote Mrs. Stern of his intentions about lighting:

As you recall it is the thought to use lamps in the Library, Beau parlor, etc. In general the lights are either recessed or simple round glass globes.  
(Wurster 1941d)

In the Living Room there is cove lighting over the Bay window – and this with lamps should give a pleasant light in this room. It was our thought that the cove lighting is so located that the light would not reflect in the glass which looks out toward the city and bridge lights. (Wurster 1941e)

Later he wrote Elkins about lighting:

We have a contract with Phoenix Day Co. to furnish the lighting fixtures and we should order these now.

The office has carefully studied these and we have so placed the outlets that the effect is to be casual – rather than focal. The lighting fixtures in the stairway will be two in number and placed in the corners. With this in mind I think the fixtures will be large enough. Then in the Entrance Hall we have three outlets which we have kept as ceiling outlets so that the fixtures will be sympathetic. (Wurster 1942a)

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and the United States’ entry into the war, there was little immediate correspondence in the archives. Then in February, Wurster wrote to Corbett, “all work of a private sort has stopped out here” (Wurster 1942b) and to Elkins, “This is a difficult time in which to be building and I think will be increasingly so.” (Wurster 1942a)
The progress report of 16 February 1942 bore out Wurster’s assessment. The project continued to fall further behind schedule due to problems getting both materials and labor. At that time, two-thirds of the contract time had elapsed but only one-third of the project was complete.

As construction of the building proceeded the architects continued to be concerned largely with two issues: first, interior finishes and furnishings and second, the landscaping.

The relationship between Wurster and the interior designer, Mrs. Frances A. Elkins, was difficult but ultimately satisfactory. Mrs. Stern chose Elkins to handle the interiors although Wurster would have preferred to take care of them himself. On an early note from Mrs. Stern to Wurster about this, the word “DAMN” was written in red pencil at the top of the page of Wurster’s office copy. (Stern 1941) In March Wurster responded politely but with annoyance to Elkins suggestion of a large tin mirror in the living room. (Elkins 1942a, Wurster 1942a) In May, the University wrote to clarify Elkins’ role: “At Mrs. Stern’s request Mrs. Elkins will have control of the selection of furniture, fabrics, etc. (Evans 1942a) Elkins’ responsibilities included blankets; beds and mattresses; bedroom chests, desks, and chairs; carpets; dining room furniture; office furniture; curtains and shades; mirrors; china, glassware, trays, and silverware; kitchen and janitorial equipment. (Evans 1942b)

Nevertheless, in June Elkins described Wurster’s design for the living room as “disturbing . . . quite pretentious and not very beautiful” (Elkins 1942b) to which Wurster replied, “we changed it once at your request . . . All the materials have been ordered for the work, and this, together with our liking for the design, leads us to keep it ‘as corrected.’” (Wurster 1942f) They also corresponded about wood finishes, floors, radiators, the stair railing, and doors. But when it was all over, Wurster wrote to Corbett: “Frances Elkins has done a wonderful job on the furniture. Everyone seems enthusiastic for it is light and gay.” (Wurster 1942h)

The delays in construction of Stern Hall caused by the war were recognized in a letter from the K.E. Parker Company on 18 June 1942:

We hereby make application for an extension of 30 days in which to complete our contract on the above mentioned building. This extension is necessary due to the scarcity of building mechanics. We find it almost impossible to induce any journeymen, particularly carpenters, to work on anything but defense work. (Parker 1942)

The K.E. Parker Company completed its contract on 24 August 1942. The refrigeration contract was completed on 2 October 1942 and the kitchen equipment contract was completed on 19 October 1942.
While the landscaping was still unfinished and before the opening of the building, Corbett wrote to Mrs. Stern expressing his satisfaction with the result and clarifying his role:

... I have had word from time to time from Mr. Wurster in regard to the progress of the building and copies of plans as they have been developed, and I must confess to a feeling of real pride in the final outcome. I don’t get this because of any great contribution on my part personally, but because at least I had the good fortune to suggest Mr. Wurster to you, and he has done a most interesting and intriguing piece of modern architecture of which we may all be justifiably proud. (Corbett 1942)

These remarks were in addition to earlier comments he had made directly to Wurster:

I think you have done a wonderful piece of work, and considering the long time that has been involved in the operation, the many changes not only of ideas but of site location, etc., you deserve all credit for handling the job very economically, and there are certainly no regrets on my part of not having made more money out of it. (Corbett 1942b)

In a memorandum presenting a final accounting of the architects’ fees — the University would only pay 7% of the contract cost rather than the standard 8% — Wurster stated: “It has been a great honor and pleasure to have this work to do.” However, referring to “Delay brought by the foundation problems of the first site, the rise in costs, and the priority situation due to the war” Wurster noted that “money, work, and patience on everyone’s part” were required. “Everyone all along the line has given unstintingly. On our part this meant helping where possible on the furniture and on the garden with drawings and conferences. We feel there has been no inefficiency — that all has been workmanlike.”

Wurster himself spent 446 hours and Corbett spent 70 hours. But in the end after office costs, Wurster and Corbett themselves, who did not collect salaries during the course of the work, split the total amount of $69.20 remaining for salaries and profit between them. (Wurster 1943)

In the absence of any other clear evidence, this breakdown of the hours spent by the two architects on the project suggests the role each played in the design of Stern Hall. Wurster spent more than six times as many hours as Corbett; Wurster was the principle designer and he and his office developed the design and its details, prepared working drawings, oversaw construction, and worked with the structural engineer, mechanical engineer, landscape designers, and interior designer; Wurster also met most frequently with University officials and with Mrs. Stern.

At the same time, Corbett participated in the design at key points in its conception and development. His greatest involvement came in 1940 when he prepared a model and sent
blueprints of his plans to Wurster for a men’s dorm; these plans were superseded when the project was changed to a women’s dorm. Most of all, it appears that Corbett was a sympathetic reviewer of Wurster’s ideas who contributed to their conceptual development and who could provide key support to the project by reassuring Mrs. Stern that Wurster was worthy of her confidence.

**Landscaping**

Wurster was responsible for developing the relationship of the building to the site (i.e. its relationship to the topography, views, and existing vegetation). He also designed the hardscape features of the site: the three outdoor spaces adjacent to the building (Entrance Terrace and Walled Garden, Bedroom Court Terrace, and Dining Room Terrace) and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation features. As the building neared completion in the early summer of 1942, work began on refining these ideas. Initially in June 1942, John W. Gregg, a landscape architect and the director of the University’s landscape design program, was consulted. He would have been a natural choice since he served as the consulting landscape architect at the University’s various campuses and was often called on to offer advice or prepare landscape designs (Gregg 1965: 122). (Gregg characterized this role as an informal one rather than as a formal title or position.) However, based on a letter from Wurster to Mrs. Stern on 6 May, it appears that Wurster had hoped to get Isabella Worn, the noted San Francisco floral designer, involved in the project. (“How I wish Miss Worn might plant the window box on the stairway – do any inside planting – and the entrance garden!” [Wurster 1942].) Wurster was familiar with Worn’s work and had at least one previous experience of working with her. She had directed the planting for the gardens around the Yerba Buena Clubhouse on Treasure Island, in 1939, for the Golden Gate International Exposition, and Wurster had been the architect for the building. (Frances Elkins had also worked with Worn at the Yerba Buena clubhouse, where Elkins had been the interior designer, and on other projects.) Worn, who had collaborated with other architects and landscape designers as a floral consultant on a number of large residential gardens in the Bay Area, probably brought a sensibility to the project that was closer to Wurster’s and Stern’s vision for the dormitory – as a home for the women rather than as another university building – than Gregg ended up being able to provide.

Gregg was involved in a site meeting on 3 June when issues relating to the roads, terraces, tree removal (for existing trees in poor condition or to facilitate views), color scheme (presumably for plants), paths, and grading were discussed. He prepared a preliminary planting plan (received by Wurster’s office on 23 June) where he designated the location of the “proposed mass planting areas” around the building “to facilitate [the] location of [the] irrigation facilities” (Gregg 1942). Wurster responded to Gregg in a letter (dated 13 July) and thanked him for this “preliminary sketch” and laid out his own concepts for the building’s landscape treatment:
When the site was allotted to us it was realized that we best embrace the grades, irregularities, and scattered trees . . . the bedroom wings are arranged to reach down into the natural rolling land. The uncared-for grassy slope which is now present seems perfection to me. With this in mind you will note the area marked “no ground cover or shrubs” around the bedroom block. In fact the whole building is created with the thought there would be no shrub base planting. This carries into the Bedroom Court where the gravel living area could well come to the concrete walls without any planting of vines or shrubs (Wurster 13 July 1942).

Wurster went on to describe his own detailed ideas (including specific plants) for: (1) the types of vines to plant on the post and trellis systems (“Could we use a light type of material like Chilean Jasmine [at the Dining Room Terrace]? Wisteria trunks too heavy for mesh railing.’’); (2) the designated areas for vegetation at the three terraces; (3) the areas that needed screening; (4) suggestions for plants to use on the slopes (“Area at South between Bedroom Wing and Dining Room Terrace – would like a low thicket type of thing – because of the beauty of the leaf and the smell of the blossom I’ve written in “Daphne” – could this be done?’’); (5) the areas where flowers were appropriate (“In general we’ll have to be careful of the color of the blooms as certain areas of the building are red.’’); and (6) the areas where trees might be used (“Just occurred to me – what if dwarf orange or lemon trees in the raised bed of the entrance and at the edge of the Bedroom Court paving?’’).

At the end of his letter, Wurster summarized what amounted to his instructions to Gregg:

As I review what I’ve written the main items which I would stress, subject to a conference with you, are –

No planting to speak of at bedroom wing
All screen plantings of same type
Carry more eucalyptus (of better type) into the scheme
Have out of door sitting places beautiful and sweet smelling . . .

Before you go ahead with a final plan or planting will you get in touch with me?

(Gregg’s suggestion to add lawn to the Dining Room terrace was one of the contributions from Gregg that Wurster considered to be compatible with his own ideas.)

Gregg’s response to Wurster’s ideas was not found; however, Wurster and Stern were not satisfied with Gregg’s ideas for the planting. (Later in the fall, Wurster in a letter to Corbett, noted that: “Miss Isabella Worn, who did the planting on the Yerba Buena Exposition Club is helping Mr. Gregg, at Mrs. Stern’s request, and it will be wonderful to have as the Gregg results are pretty bad” [Wurster 23 September 1942].) By mid-August correspondence had been sent out that notified the various interested parties of Mrs. Stern’s decision to use Worn. And by 21
August, Worn had visited the site and had provided Wurster with preliminary ideas for the plantings that met with his approval. She proposed planting apple trees around the building, to create an orchard setting; a hedge of clipped plane trees was proposed for the east façade around the entrance area (Wurster 21 August 1942). On 24 August, Worn agreed to work “as Landscape Consultant to Mr. John Gregg, for a fee of $25.00 per day not to exceed $500.00” (Norton 1942). Gregg continued to be involved in the project (i.e., he prepared the final planting design drawing from Worn’s sketches and ideas and provided recommendations for the brick with asphalt binding paving for the Main Entrance and Dining Room terraces) but the planting design was prepared by Worn.

The “Plot Plan” for the building and site was completed on 3 September and showed the location of the hardscape features: (1) the paving for the three terraces, (2) the circulation features (entrance road and parking area, service road, and sidewalks), and (3) walls (around the entrance garden and retaining walls in the area between the bedroom wings). A “Proposed Planting Scheme” based on Isabella Worn’s ideas was also prepared on 3 September. This plan expanded on Worn’s initial ideas (from August) but replaced the apple trees in the orchard with olive trees and provided more information on the location and species of plants for hedges and in the beds in the three terraces. The information related to the plant materials was still incomplete and was not completed until early November.

In mid-September, the University called a meeting to discuss Worn’s landscaping plan because “Miss Worn shows more than can be done — what to leave out now?” (Evans 15 September 1942). In the revised planting scheme, dated 21 September, some of the olive trees had been eliminated, reducing what had been envisioned as groves or orchards south of the Bedroom Wing and to the north of the Dining Room Terrace to a row of trees at these locations. The landscaping was not completed at the time of the October opening. On 28 October, the University authorized “putting in the roads and paths around Stern Hall even though the final [landscape] plan [had] not been officially approved by the Regents Committee on Grounds and Buildings” (Norton 28 October 1942). The final “Planting Plan” with a plant list and costs was prepared by 3 November (Worn 1943). However, the planting did not begin until after 16 February 1943 (Norton 1943), and the completion date is not known.

The war and budget constraints impacted the completion of the site work. The brick paving for the entrance and three terraced areas – that formed the critical connection between the interior of the building and the exterior – had originally been part of the construction contract but was moved into the category of landscaping due to budget constraints. This work was done sometime after 7 June 1943 due to the constraints of wartime labor shortages: “The work will go
forward if, as, and when bricklayers can be found. They are extremely difficult in these days” (Robb 1943).

**Maintenance and Alterations, 1944-1955**

Until the first addition to Stern Hall in 1958-1959, few changes were made to the building and grounds, and the changes that were made were minor except for installation of the Diego Rivera mural (a process described in the Building Description section of this report).

On 12 April 1946, eight flood lights were requested on the roof of Stern Hall “for police protection.” (Aljets 1946) After several requests from the Campus Police and the residents of Stern Hall, installation of the lights was approved in May as follows:

1) Lower northwest corner of building.
2) Light in Gum tree to west of building.
3) Light east Main Entrance, to better illuminate area in front of building.
(Burness 1947)

On 10 December 1947 a request was made to convert a linen closet to a toilet to comply with state law requiring separate facilities for men and women employees. (Nedderson 1947)

In 1950 the University corrected an “unsightly stain on the outside of Stern Hall.” (Nedderson 1950)

Also in 1950 the University addressed three landscaping and grounds issues around Stern Hall. By 15 August 1950 “the earth bank at the corner of Gayley Road and Hearst Avenue” was cut away in association with improvements to the intersection of the roads. (Norton 1950) The reason for this had been explained to President Sproul:

One thing that would improve the aspect of the building from the west would be the reduction of the cut face along Gayley Road to effect a more gradually modeled foreground, and the continuation of the Olive Grove. (Evans 1950)

At that time, plans were being prepared to replace “the existing wooden steps leading to Stern Hall from Gayley Road” (Nedderson 1950). After noting that the area between Stern Hall and Gayley Road “needs landscaping very badly” (Norton 1950), work on this began to move forward in September under the direction of Norman Jensen in the Office of Architects and Engineers:
Stern Hall landscaping plans are being drawn now and will be ready in the next few days. We expect to have them out to bid shortly so that the landscape plantings can be made after the first fall rain. (Norton 1950)

In the summer of 1951 a $400 renovation of the game room and $1,200 was spent on fabrics for the furniture by the Office of Grounds and Buildings to match the original Elkins designs. (Nedderson 1951)

In April 1952, Wurster wrote Mrs. Stern from his office on the campus where he was able to monitor the condition of Stern Hall:

. . .Of course the University expects to do all the regular maintenance which comes to every building, particularly the one occupied by a group, such as mending the furniture, replacing the table ware and the like. The question of the curtains in the dining room and in the living room might seem another matter as they are each a part of the decorative scheme.

After the Hall was built certain eucalyptus trees were cut down which has meant more sun at the windows than we had planned for. This is true for both the dining room and the living room and will last until the pines now planted grow tall.

This means that the curtains at the dining room have gone to pieces with the sun and now need replacing. To save the curtains and make it possible to have tempered light, some sort of roll bamboo or slatted blind would be of great help. Somewhat the same thing is true in the living room . . .

In August he wrote to her again describing work that had been done:

The new curtains at Stern Hall are very beautiful and were all installed on Saturday last. I know you will like them…

The dining room curtains have been cleaned and revived -- the rolled bamboo shades remove the high glare and the charcoal color is beautiful.

In the living room the red-blue-yellow Peruvian linen curtains at the northeast windows are beautiful and I am happy you had us stay by the original bright colors. The vertical wood curtains on the traverse at the southwest windows remove the glare and yet give occasional glimpses of the view…. (Wurster 1952)

Diego Rivera Mural

Following Mrs. Stern’s death, her daughter, Mrs. Walter Haas (Elise) introduced the idea of donating her mother’s Diego Rivera mural to the University in a note to Wurster dated 30 June (the date was written without a year; it must be 1955 or possibly earlier):
I have suggested to my mother that she bequeath to Stern Hall the fresco Diego Rivera did on her dining-room wall in Atherton...Before any steps are taken, we would like to know whether you think well of the idea and where the fresco might be placed indoors. My thought was above the fireplace if it fits but we are open to suggestions .... (Haas 1955)

On 28 February 1956, an internal memorandum from the General Counsel of the University informed Sproul (who had remained president of the university system after the administration was reorganized with the creation of a position of chancellor for each campus in 1952), that Rosalie Stern had left a fresco painted by Diego Rivera in her house in Atherton to the University for installation in Stern Hall. (Cunningham 1956) On 13 March 1956, Clark Kerr, Chancellor of the Berkeley campus was informed of the donation and about a consideration in accepting it:

As you may know, this fresco has been discussed before, and there has, apparently, been some question as to its appropriateness for installation in Stern Hall, but whether because of the Communist affiliations of Rivera alone, or because of that and some social significance of the subject matter of the fresco, I do not know. (Pettitt 1956)

Kerr responded with a recommendation to accept the mural. He dismissed concerns about its Communist associations without mentioning the word:

The subject matter is that of an orchard in bloom with Mrs. Stern’s grandchildren (I think) depicted at play in the orchard. I might add that Rivera’s murals are owned and exhibited at the California School of Fine Arts and the Stock Exchange in San Francisco. San Francisco City College also owns one which is stored at present. (Kerr 1956)

In May the University was informed that transmittal of the mural would not occur until after the estate was settled which would be “quite a while yet.” (Cunningham 1956b)

On 18 June 1956 Wurster wrote to Mrs. Haas:

This will express appreciation of your visit to Stern Hall when we examined locations for the placing of the mural. I feel your discovery of the location and decision to place it, in the hall on the wall opposite the circular stair, is very wonderful. (Wurster 1956)

On 23 August 1956 the Regents accepted the donation of the mural (University of California 1956) From September to December Wurster, Karl A. Kasten, Curator of Art Materials, and John Takeuchi of the Office of Architects and Engineers moved and reinstalled the mural. They
inspected the mural in its original location; Takeuchi prepared plans and specifications, removed the mural from the house in Atherton, and transported it to Berkeley. On 12 December 1956, Wurster wrote to Mrs. Haas: “You will be pleased to know the Rivera mural is to arrive at Stern Hall in the morning.” (Wurster 1956) It is not known when installation of the mural in Stern Hall was complete.

Additional Furnishings

In the course of acquiring and moving the mural new furnishings were also given to Stern Hall. The portrait of Mrs. Stern was hung in the living room of Stern Hall on 17 June 1956 with a “simple ceremony.” (Wurster 1956) The source of the portrait is unknown.

In addition, several pieces of furniture from Mrs. Stern’s estate were also donated. Following correspondence between Wurster and Mrs. Haas a sideboard, a table, and sixteen chairs were “transferred to Stern Hall from the Stern estate.” (Kasten 1956)

First Addition

By 1952 the University was already considering an addition to Stern Hall. More than helping with the ever-present need for student housing and responding to the popularity of Stern Hall, an addition would make the building more efficient to operate because of the relationship of residents to the cost of the dining hall; without the addition the building was losing money even when fully occupied. On 19 March 1952, Wurster wrote to Walter Haas:

. . . As you know I have great pride in Stern Hall and the University consults me about all matters which pertain to its physical well being. . . . they need 10 to 20 more to balance the budget without raising the charge – now $375 per semester as compared to Bowles at $350. I mention this to you for I do not want to do this if you and Elyse [sic] think it inappropriate . . . .

The issue faded away until 1955 when it became a matter of urgent concern. On 7 April 1955, Clark Kerr asked President Sproul to approve an addition to Stern Hall for thirty women. (Kerr 1955) This proposal was approved by the Regents on 14 July 1955 with the firm of Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons as architects and with funding from the University. (University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1955)

On 25 July 1955, Wurster presented preliminary plans for a three-story addition for thirty women with an enlarged dining room to a meeting of university officials and representatives of the Office of Architects and Engineers. In follow-up meetings and correspondence the proposal was modified by 15 August 1955 to include a fourth story and expanded living room and recreation room space. This was followed by lengthy consideration of the financing of the building which
was considered unrealistic by various administrators. This period of planning and discussion culminated on 30 November 1955 at a meeting of the Berkeley Campus Planning Committee:

Dean Wurster stated that he now felt that a simpler structure than had been planned is in order. He did not wish, he said, to jeopardize the future residence halls program by what might appear on the surface to be excessive cost in the design of this addition, which is small compared to the anticipated program. The committee was in sympathy with his statements and agreed that presentation of the project to the Regents should be postponed, possibly until the first unit of the proposed residence halls is under way.

The final point was a reference to the concurrent planning of the large student housing development beyond the perimeter of the campus, which later became the “high-rise” residence hall units constructed on the Southside in the later 1950s and early 1960s.

Apparently, nothing more was done until July 1956 when the Regents authorized a study.

... of the possibility of adding a wing to Stern Hall on the Berkeley campus. This study revealed that the kitchen and social facilities of the present hall could accommodate additional students if space could be provided for additional living quarters. Dean Wurster showed sketches of the proposed addition to the hall and explained that it was planned to contain four floors of six rooms each and a lounge to house 46 additional girls. Further, the dining area would be increased to accommodate the additional residents. The wing would extend out from the south end of the hall and would occupy ground that would not be used for anything else.

Accordingly, Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons prepared preliminary plans and cost estimates. On 8 November 1956 Wurster wrote to Mrs. Walter Haas with the cost estimate:

At long last I have the data on the cost of the new wing for Stern Hall. While the cost of the project has gone up in the last year so has the amount risen which comes properly from the university funds.

The estimated cost of the new wing including all items is $6500 per student. The current estimated cost per student of the residence halls in the building program is $5437. Thus the differential of $1063 per student gives approximately $50,000 which is needed to bring it to the same base as the residence hall program.

As I remember our conversation, it was thought that you would talk informally with Bob Sproul and tell him you had sought this information and question him as to his views on the entire project. ... (Wurster 1956b)
On 13 December 1956, the Regents:

... approved the preliminary plans and authorized the preparation of working drawings for the addition with the understanding that bids would be collected only when funds had been secured to finance the construction of the addition.

(University of California. Regents. Grounds and Buildings 1956)

Although the Regents approved preparation of the working drawings, due to an oversight by the University Engineer, the architects were not given authorization to proceed and nothing was done on the project in 1957.

Then, toward the end of 1957 the issue was revived when the Haas family clarified their offer of $50,000 for the addition — an amount that would cover the difference between a dorm funded at the level of other dorms and maintaining Stern Hall at the same high level of quality and accommodations. The family wanted the donation accepted by the end of the 1957 tax year. It was not accepted due to ongoing uncertainty about the overall financing of the project.

In January 1958 Mrs. Haas said that the $50,000 offer would probably be withdrawn if the University didn’t accept by 1 March 1958. Then, on 27 February 1958, the University became aware of a $1,000,000 surplus from a federal grant for the Berkeley Student Center some of which could be applied to the Stern Hall addition, making it possible to accept the $50,000 from the Haas family. (Nedderson 1956)

By this time it appeared that even with the addition, Stern Hall would not pay its way. However, the University had reasons to proceed:

Chancellor Kerr wishes to go ahead with this project and feels that it should be given a priority of it in the Berkeley building program. Professor Brown explained that the Chancellor felt this project was in the same category as the Strawberry Canyon development project in that it has no priority as established by the local campus committees, but assumes the highest priority because it is delivered with a gift. It is for this reason that Chancellor Kerr feels a strong obligation to the donor to give the project a top priority even though the funds allocated might make it necessary to delay the funding of a parking project.

(Nedderson 1958)

On 14 March 1958 the Finance Committee of the Board of Regents agreed to this plan.

Second Addition, 1978-1979

In May 1978, Walter Haas wrote to the University saying that the family did not object to another addition to Stern Hall but would not make a donation for it — they were in the process
of endowing a Chair in East Asian Studies. In addition, Haas wrote that the family would not approve of changing single rooms in Stern Hall to double rooms which the University was considering because of the severe need for housing: “it was Mrs. Stern’s particular desire that women should have especially agreeable surroundings.” (Haas 1978)

In April 1979 the Department of Facilities Management prepared a project description for an addition to Stern Hall:

This project will provide 55 housing units for 110 students as an addition to Stern Hall. It will be a four story wing at the south end of the existing building. The project will also provide alterations and an addition to the existing dining room. This will increase the total number of residents in Stern Hall to 250.

It will provide parking for 55 cars in a structure east of the existing Stern Hall parking. The parking may replace some of the existing surface parking.

The department gave the following reasons why the addition was needed:

1) Stern Hall is a unique and popular hall with a high demand for residence.

2) The additional occupancy will provide a more efficient operation since the hall has full dining and common room facilities that could well accommodate a larger number.

3) There were 506 women on the waiting list for room and board accommodations at the start of the 1978 fall quarter.

4) The hall will more fully utilize its prime on-campus site to serve more students.

5) 40-50% of the women have reapplied in past years to continue their residence at the hall.

In July and August 1979 work was underway by Ratcliff Architects to develop the program for the addition. By late September 1979, ten firms had responded to ads for an architect. The winning firm, Marquis Associates, was interviewed in October and approved by the Board of Regents at their November 1979 meeting.

The project team included Peter Winkelstein, principal-in-charge; Cathy Simon, project architect; Phyllis Martin-Vegue, interior designer; and Lamberto Morris, project designer for Marquis Associates. In addition, the team included Forell/Elsesser, structural engineers; Marion, Cerbatos & Tomasi, mechanical and electrical engineers; Richard Vignolo, landscape architect; and Adamson Associates, cost estimator.
Construction documents were completed 1 August 1980.

In addition to the four-story wing, kitchen alterations, and an addition to the dining room, the project expanded to include a new elevator tower addition, renovation of the laundry, and a new trellis to match the existing.

This addition was largely completed by 19 September 1981, the day students moved in. Wardrobes in the rooms and the kitchen were not ready at the opening. Completion of the 110 bed addition raised the current capacity of Stern Hall to 250 residents.

New Neighbors

While work on the second addition was underway a proposal for yet another addition was reported in the *Daily Cal* for an eighty-bed annex to Stern Hall to be located to the north and west “on a knoll across from Founders’ Rock.” (Digby 1981) This proposal was not realized but may have been the beginning of what later became Foothill Student Housing, designed by Ratcliff Architects (Executive Architect) and William Turnbull Associates (Associated Architect), completed in 1989-1991.

In 2006-2007, Stanley Hall, a tall research facility for bioscience, was completed across Gayley Road from Stern Hall, partially blocking the view.

SOCIAL HISTORY OF STERN HALL, 1942-PRESENT

Building Name

Months before the building opened, work was underway to prepare for the use of the building. One of the first items of business was its name. On 7 May 1942, President Sproul’s secretary wrote to him:

> Mrs. Stern just telephoned in response to your call yesterday, saying that she had discussed the name of the residence hall with her daughter and they are quite agreeable to “Stern Hall.” I asked her if she wanted any name in front of it, and she said no, she liked it just “Stern Hall.”

This was formalized two weeks later:

> At the meeting of the Regents held on May 22, in compliance with the request of the donor, the new women’s dormitory on the Berkeley campus was named “Stern Hall.”
Administration

Discussions began in March 1942 about the appropriate form of administration of Stern Hall. Key decisions were to hire a Resident Director and to create an Admissions Board of administrators and students whose job would be to select students to live in the dorm. This committee would avoid the risk that “exclusively student election smacks too much of sorority techniques.” Decisions were made to have a mix of students who paid part of the cost by working, and “to have a required scholastic minimum.” Mrs. Stern’s daughter, Mrs. Haas “mentioned the problem of limitation of students of the Jewish race . . . her preference and Mrs. Stern’s was for a definite percentage.” (Greene 1942) How this last issue was resolved is unknown. In May, Mrs. Stern approved the plan for “the administration of the hall.” (Stern 1942)

There were many applications for the position of Resident Director, resulting in the hiring of Florence Greene.

Mrs. Greene was a leader of the Women’s Club in Monterey and Carmel and was first recommended to us by Mrs. Cheney. Professor Joseph Le Conte, Miss Maud Sutton, Mrs. Guy Chick, and Mrs. Duncan McDuffie recommended her highly. Mrs. Greene is a widow . . . and she seems to be a person of character, good sense, and charm. She attended the University of California three years in the class of 1904. . . . her major was architecture.

Opening of the Building

Planning began in September for the October opening of the building which consisted of two events before the students moved in on the afternoon of 7 October 1942. On Sunday 4 October 1942, the Housewarming of Stern Hall was held for guests of the Regents. On Monday 5 October 1942 the University held a more general open house, although the general public was not specifically invited. The newspaper announcement of this event was: “Stern Hall will be open for inspection to students, members of the faculty and administration, and friends of the University of California from eleven until three o’clock on Monday October 5.”

While the Monday open house was an informal event for the University community, the Sunday Housewarming included speeches and a dedication. The guest list included friends and family of Mrs. Stern from as far away as Boston, New York, and Washington and members of prominent San Francisco families including Haas, Heller, Koshland, Lilienthal, Sutro, and Weill; members of the Berkeley architectural community including William C. Hays, Howard Moise, Warren Perry, and William G. Merchant as well as William Wurster, Theodore Bernardi, and Isabella Worn; and the Board of Regents including Governor Cuthbert Olson, Lt. Governor Ellis
Student Government

Before the dorm was opened to students, Mary B. Davidson, Dean of Women, prepared a plan for student government

. . . which follows the plan now in force in the approved boarding houses and sororities on this campus. It is based on the ideal which combines all the best features of both sorority living and boarding house living. The rules which the student government at Stern Hall follow are those drawn up by the Women’s Executive Committee of the Associated Students and enforced by the Women’s Judiciary Committee. (Davidson 1942c)

Davidson stressed her point of view:

I am particularly anxious that Stern Hall set the example for student government in a living group. My whole thought has been directed toward making the students rather than the Director of Residence responsible for the conduct and good judgment of their fellow students.

The University’s Rules for Sororities and Dormitories, effective August 1941, applied to Stern Hall. These detailed rules concerned House Organization including election of officers and regular required meetings of all residents; week night hours and quiet times; week end hours; lights out; the sign-out system; and miscellaneous such as when and where men were allowed. (Davidson 1942)

Dean Davidson also elaborated on the establishment of committees at Stern Hall: the Scholarship Committee enforced study hours; the Standards Committee was “concerned with the intangible things which go to make up the spirit and internal discipline in a house”; the Hall Committee oversaw housekeeping and inspected rooms; the Social Committee planned dances and events, and the Judiciary Committee handled discipline. (Davidson 1942)

From the spring before its first opening Stern Hall was extremely popular. On behalf of daughters, granddaughters, nieces, friends, daughters of friends, etc. every year many letters were written to university administrators trying to gain admission to Stern Hall. These letters were written by ordinary people, but mostly they were written by prominent people — judges, society figures, friends of Mrs. Stern, foreign consuls, state senators, state assembly representatives, Regents, San Francisco Supervisors, the Attorney General, Dean of the Medical School, President pro tem of the State Senate, and university officers.
These requests were made when there was little hope in getting in most years. In 1944, for example, there were 200 applications for four openings. Before the additions made in 1959 and 1981, one of the arguments made was that there were always many more applicants than spaces available.

Several sources provide a picture of life at Stern Hall. The minutes of the Executive Committee of the Stern Hall Association consisting of the officers of the dorm and the minutes of the required weekly meetings of all residents show Stern Hall through its organizational structure. Apart from the committees required by University rules, others were formed by Stern Hall, some specifically for wartime, including Air Raid Warden, Stamps and Bonds, and War. There was no Victory Garden due to lack of interest. Much of the business of the meetings was routine — assigning Big Sisters to new girls, distributing schedules of “girls serving at meals,” choosing themes for parties (e.g., Brawl Ball, Scavenger Hunt, Harlem Hop), getting parent’s permission “for entertaining service men.” Meetings opened with the Stern Hall Hymn and closed with All Hail to California. (Stern Hall Association 1942-1945)

For the war years, an essay by Rhoda Haas Goldman, Rosalie Stern’s granddaughter provides another view. Goldman wrote about living in the dorm, decorating her room, living with roommates, living with rules, eating in the dining room, life during the war, etc. (Goldman 1996)

After the war of course the wartime committees ended. New committees included historian, scrapbook, parliamentarian, songleader, flowers, birthday. In 1946 there was a Football Queen contest and buses took students to Stanford for important games. In 1951 there was an International House Exchange program, a Christmas party for underprivileged children, and a model United Nations. In 1959, a student “asked if we would be interested in sending a candidate to the AEPI Sweetheart Contest. Maria [illegible] moved that we do not enter the contest, and the motion was carried.” In 1966, “Maggie said to be sure to pull down the shades at night.” On 20 September 1977, the following warning was posted: “Caution: The Moonies live across the street in the big white house with the Greek columns. You may be invited to dinner. You may go, but no one promises that you will return!! These people don’t usually admit to you who they are . . . BE CAREFUL . . .” (Stern Hall Association 1946-1977)

A retrospective look at Stern Hall by two students from 1978 to 1982 recalled other aspects of the dorm’s history. All social functions were obligatory and there was a Blind Date Bureau “to facilitate the attendance of the less out-going residents.” Among the rules in the early years were those that governed clothing. Formal gowns were often worn at social events. Clothes rules were first relaxed in 1956 when hose and heels were required only at dinner. In 1965, pants were first allowed at dinner. Other rules were also generally relaxed so that by 1982 student government consisted only of the Executive Committee; there were no fines, no punishments, no
inspections, men in the rooms were OK. Over the years there was a great variety of events and activities beyond dances, including guest speakers, fireside chats, class sings, snoop-n-shows (tour all rooms), and language tables. For many years there was a Faculty Fellows program with faculty teas and dinners. By 1982 many traditions had died out, like Candy Passings that announced engagements to be married. One surviving tradition was the connection to Bowles Hall. In 1982 “most of the Stern’s social events are linked with Bowles Hall including the annual canoe trip and luau.” (Hepp and Lubick 1982)

One of the biggest changes came with the completion of the second addition to Stern Hall in 1981. At that time Housing Office policies limited the numbers of returning students because of a general housing shortage and a priority the campus placed on housing incoming freshmen. (Hepp and Lubick 1982) This changed the balance of women by class – more freshmen were living in each residence hall, including Stern – and also affected the social cohesiveness of the residents and their identity with Stern Hall.
HISTORIC CONTEXTS

ROSALIE MEYER STERN (1869-1956)

Rosalie Meyer Stern shared with Isabella Worn (the plant materials designer for Stern Hall) the experience and the influences of being the child of a father who was an early and successful settler in California. Her father had settled in Los Angeles in 1861. He had previously lived in San Francisco after emigrating from Strausbourg, France. Laurence Roth, in his essay on the history of the Stern family for the 50th anniversary of the Stern Grove Festival, described Meyer as a “pioneer with a pioneer’s soul and mind to go with it. He came out West a poor man, but he knew that success, if it could be had anywhere, could be had here. Among the papers Meyer carried with him from Europe was a letter of introduction to Alexandre Weill, partner in the San Francisco branch of Lazard Freres, a French import firm. Meyer went to work as a clerk and bookkeeper for the company in Los Angeles, but he also served as a sort of unofficial night watchman at the store where he worked. He lived in a room behind the sales area and at night slept with a gun in his reach. His plans progressed admirably. He shot no one, became a partner, and then he bought the store” (Roth 1987: 10).

He married Harriet Newmark in 1867, and Rosalie, their first child, was born on 19 April 1869. Harriet Meyer married when she was sixteen years old and had eight children by the time she was thirty-two. The strain of pregnancies and raising children left her often unwell, and Rosalie was called upon to take on increasing responsibilities as the surrogate mother to her siblings. Her major hope throughout her childhood was that her mother, whom she loved intensely, would regain her health. One of her chief pleasures in the midst of her childhood responsibilities, and one that would continue all her life, was her love of music. In 1883, when Rosalie was fourteen, her family moved to San Francisco. Her father had accepted a position with the San Francisco branch of the London, Paris, and American Bank. (Roth 1987: 10-11)

In 1892, after a broken engagement, Rosalie and her sister Elise went to stay in Paris with their sister Ernestine and her husband, Léon Zadoc Kahn, the Grand Rabbi of France. It was during her stay there that she met Sigmund Stern, a fellow San Franciscan who was touring Europe with his brother Louis. Stern was a favorite nephew of Levi Strauss (his father, David, had married Strauss’s sister, Fanny), another San Francisco pioneer “who trusted in his own brains and tenacity”(Roth 1987: 12) and whose patented “waist overall” (the old name for jeans), sold to gold prospectors during the California Gold Rush, have become a ubiquitous part of the modern wardrobe. Sigmund Stern and Rosalie Meyer fell in love, and he proposed to her in July. On 3 October 1892, they were married in San Francisco in her parents’ house, located at the corner of Pine and Gough (Roth 1987: 12-13 and Levi Strauss & Company Website). (Rosalie’s sister Elise, who accompanied her on the trip to Paris, married Sigmund’s brother Abraham.)
During the first months of their marriage, the Sterns lived at the Palace Hotel. Then they rented a house on Buchanan Street where their daughter, Elise, was born in 1893. By 1900, they were living in their own home, at Pacific and Octavia, which had been designed by Richard Howland Hunt. (Roth 1897: 14) Their life together was, by all accounts, a happy one.

Both Sterns were actively involved in community affairs and charitable organizations. In 1906, due to increasing business pressures, Sigmund resigned his position on the board of Associated Charities, and Rosalie took his place. Her work on this board typified one of her key characteristics — the ability to “assess the problem, confront it directly, solve it.” In 1906, Associated Charities “was an investigating body which turned cases over to the proper assisting agencies. It was also virtually bankrupt. Everyone on the board knew the situation was unacceptable, but only Rosalie did anything about it . . . She convened a meeting of friends and associates and from them solicited pledges. After the meeting, the Associated Charities’ account stood at $6,000” (Roth 1987: 15).

The Sterns shared a love of the arts and, in particular, the love of music. Sigmund was a founding member of the Board of Governors of the Musical Association of San Francisco, who established a permanent symphony orchestra in the city in 1911. They were founding members of the San Francisco Opera, which was formally established in 1923, and Sigmund served on its Board of Governors. In the 1930s, Rosalie would assist in the founding of the Junior Civic Symphony. Through their support of the music world of San Francisco, Rosalie met people whom she would call on later in life to support the Stern Grove music festival (Roth 1987: 16, 23).

In 1917, Rosalie joined the boards of the Pioneer Kindergarten Society and the Children’s Agency. During World War I, she was appointed Associate Field Director of Military Relief for the Red Cross, one of only three women in the country to hold this position. During this war, she organized women to make bandages and gowns for the Red Cross on sewing machines, lent from Levi Strauss & Co and set up in the ballroom of her home. In 1919, she was appointed by Mayor James Rolph to the Playground Commission. The Sterns shared an “intense interest in the Playground and Recreational Movement” (Roth 1987: 21), and Rosalie was an active member of the Playground Commission. She used her position and connections to influence the expansion of the city’s recreational facilities and programs. She eventually served as the president of the commission and would remain an influential member until 1956, when she resigned due to ill health just months before her death (Roth 1987: 16-17, 21).

On 24 April 1928, Sigmund Stern died of cancer; he was seventy years old. In the midst of her grief, Rosalie Stern was determined to honor her husband with a memorial, but she wanted something that would reflect how he had lived his life and his belief in giving back to his
community. She ended up buying the Trocadero Inn and 12 acres of land in San Francisco and developed this site in a memorial to Sigmund Stern. (The site became the nucleus of San Francisco’s Stern Grove and Pine Lake Park.) The park and the series of free outdoor concerts—that became the Stern Grove Festival—were the focus of her philanthropic efforts for the remainder of her life, and she was intimately involved in all aspects of running the festival. She planned the schedule and contacted and negotiated with artists. “When she wanted artists, she wrote to them directly, and when artists wanted to appear at the Grove, they wrote to her.” She came out every week before a concert to make sure the walks and pathways had been swept, that the benches were perfectly lined up. At the concerts, she sat at her table, greeting people, and “presiding over luncheons whose menu never varied: cold chicken, potato salad, deviled eggs, pound cake, and fruit” (Roth 1987: 34).

In late 1937, Stern offered to donate $250,000 to the University of California to finance the construction of a men’s dormitory, as another memorial in honor of her husband, Sigmund, who graduated from there in 1879; as explained elsewhere, this was later changed to a women’s dormitory. As was the case with the design and development of Stern Grove, in San Francisco, Stern was intimately involved in selecting the site and the designers and influencing the design of Stern Hall, the name given to the dormitory. During the planning and construction of Stern Hall (between 1937 and its dedication in 1942), her efforts for other causes also continued. In 1940, she organized a benefit concert for the Allied Relief Fund at Stern Grove and worked throughout World War II on behalf of French refugees. After the war, she was made a Commander of the Legion of Honor by the post-war French government (Roth 1987: 29-31). Stern Hall, the first women’s dormitory on the campus, was dedicated in October 1942.

In 1955, her brother Eugene Meyer, chairman of the board of the Washington Post and Times-Herald, established an endowment in honor of Rosalie Stern at the University of California that was to be used to “reward public service by women graduates of the Berkeley campus.” Rosalie Meyer Stern died on 8 February 1956; she was 86 years old. On the day of her funeral, flags in San Francisco were flown at half staff in her honor (San Francisco Chronicle 1956). Stern was survived by her daughter Elise Stern Haas (1893-1990), and her grandchildren Walter Haas, Jr. (1916-1995), Peter Haas (b.1918), and Rhoda Haas Goldman (1925-1996). All followed the tradition established by their grandparents of community involvement and philanthropy to San Francisco and continued to be generous benefactors to the University of California.

**HOUSING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

According to a historian of the university, Verne Stadtman, “At the time of the founding of the University, the state declared that there should be no dormitory system, a restriction that was subsequently removed from the law.” (Stadtman 1967: 104) “Dormitories were suspected by
mid-nineteenth-century educators and moralists of being incubators of student disorder.” (Stadtman, 1996: 157) This early ambivalence of the University toward student housing lasted for about sixty years during which time the University’s direct involvement in providing housing was limited to two small efforts. As part of the Kenitzer and Farquharson plan of the university in 1869, “In 1874 the Regents approved the construction of eight cottages (Kepler Cottages) for the use of students, each cottage to accommodate ten persons. These were leased to student clubs,” with generally unsatisfactory results. (Stadtman 1967: 104) These were one-story wooden cottages with “six sites north of the present site of Edwards Stadium and Evans Baseball Diamond and two in the vicinity of where the Faculty Club now stands.” (Helfand 2002: 8) And, in August 1909 the dean of women unofficially sponsored College Hall, “a private dormitory experiment for women students,” situated at the northwest corner of the intersection of Hearst Avenue and La Loma, not far north of where Stern Hall would eventually be built. (Stadtman 1967: 104)

To meet the student housing need, private residences were independently organized by students—including fraternities, sororities, and residential “clubs” without Greek letter affiliations—and many boarding and rooming houses were built privately in Berkeley. In addition, during the first several decades of the University a large percentage of students came from the Bay Area, and from Berkeley in particular, and lived at home; some families would move intact to Berkeley so one or more children could attend the state university. Apartments and flats were also built by private speculators for the student market, although apartment living did not accommodate the large percentage of students it would in later decades.

Women students enrolled at the Berkeley campus in large numbers and percentages, relative to other co-educational institutions of higher education in the United States, from early on. In the absence of University provided housing, the private market responded to the need for women’s housing not just through the creation of sororities but through a network of women’s boarding and rooming houses in converted old homes and purpose-built lodgings near the campus. Many local families, including faculty and staff households, also rented out one or more bedrooms of their homes to students either to earn income or acquire part-time domestic help.

Some of the boarding and rooming residences housed only a handful of students, while others were essentially small private dormitories, large enough to accommodate as many as 60 or 70 women at a time. Most were located within a few blocks of the campus, particularly in the Telegraph Avenue neighborhood, today’s Southside, where several women’s residences might be found on a single block. They were typically privately owned, and managed by a live-in housemother, either the owner, or a woman who was hired as a manager, or someone who rented an entire house and operated it. These houses had their own distinct character—“Casa Hispana”,
“Magnolia Manor”, “Epworth Hall”—often with a religious or cultural theme or identity. (Finacom 2008) They were affiliated in an association of “approved housing”. Each house elected a representative to a student board, and they socialized amongst each other and with other students with teas, dinners, dances, and other events.

For the first part of the 20th century, the University indirectly oversaw this housing through the office of the Dean of Woman. While the houses were all privately owned and operated, the University regularly sent out “living accommodation inspectors” who would visit and determine if each residence met appropriate standards for sanitation, other living conditions, and general wholesomeness for young, unmarried, women. If a house passed muster, it was placed on a regularly updated and published list of “approved housing” distributed to the women students; at their high point, these lists included the names and addresses of dozens of residences accommodating hundreds of women.

For many years, unlike male students who could live anywhere, women students were required to have their housing choices approved by the Dean of Women. Selecting a residence from the pre-approved list was a simple way to meet this condition, and to find a residential community since each house, as noted above, had its own character, customs, and traditions.

Thus, in the decades before Stern Hall was constructed, the housing accommodations most familiar to women students in Berkeley included: living at home; living in a sorority; living in an approved house; renting a room in a home (often in exchange for services such as kitchen or cleaning work, or childcare). This was the milieu in which Mrs. Stern carefully planned her residential gift.

While the university did little actually to provide and operate it own housing in the early years, the issue was intermittently raised in campus plans. The earliest proposal for housing was made by Frederick Law Olmsted in his 1866 plan for the College of California — the predecessor of the University of California. In relation to a central axis, Olmsted designated ‘grounds for residences’ to the east and west, as well as to the south between the creek and the College Homestead subdivision.” (Helfand 2002: 5) Those sites on the east would be the first proposal for student housing in the general area where Bowles Hall, Stern Hall, and Foothill Student Housing would later be built. According to Helfand, Olmsted also “advised against the construction of dormitories, suggesting that instead students might rent accommodations within the planned College Homestead subdivision.” Olmsted “recommended that student residences have ‘the general appearance of large domestic houses, and contain . . . a respectably furnished drawing-room and dining-room for the common use of the students, together with a sufficient number of private rooms to accompany from twenty to forty lodgers.’” (Helfand 2002: 284)
For his winning design in the 1899 Hearst Plan for the University of California, Emile Benard proposed student housing segregated from the main campus: “An elaborate composition was created for the hill to the east of the central campus, where non-academic buildings and dormitories were located.” (Woodbridge 2002: 41) This proposal also located student housing in the foothill section of the campus at its east end, where Bowles Hall, Stern Hall, and Foothill Student Housing would later be built.

When John Galen Howard was hired to modify the Benard plan, at first in 1908 he proposed building dormitories on the hill to the east as Benard had done, and at the west end of the campus near downtown Berkeley. Housing was also considered and rejected in his preliminary plans for the Campanile (Helfand 2002: 45). However, in his revised plan of 1914, there were no dormitories or other forms of student housing.

While these various ideas were proposed and considered, student housing developed in a form more-or-less like that proposed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1866. That is, not with dormitories but with homes and buildings with home-like appearances occupied as rooming houses, boarding houses, residential clubs, fraternities, sororities, and in the 1930s, cooperatives.

As the student population of the University grew, “the need for student housing became evident.” (Stadtman 1967: 104) From about 200 students in its first decade, the student population had grown to 2229 in 1900, to 3746 in 1910, and 10,716 in 1920. The opening of UCLA slowed enrollment growth for a while but the student population grew from 11,824 in 1930 to 17,013 in 1940. (Stadtman 1967: 212-225)

This growth led to construction of the first permanent dormitory at the University of California, Bowles Hall, in 1928-1930. Bowles Hall was built with a donation from Mary McNear Bowles “in memory of her husband, Regent Philip Ernst Bowles,” (Helfand 2002: 257)

Bowles Hall was located in the foothill area east of the main campus where Olmsted, Benard, and Howard had all proposed student dormitories. It was a Collegiate Gothic style structure designed by Beaux Arts trained architect George W. Kelham and built of reinforced concrete, originally for 104 male students.

Around the same time, efforts were underway to build International House, a coeducational dormitory for both foreign and American students. Part of a movement by the YMCA and funded by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. with a donation of $1.8 million, International House was not an initiative of the university, but it served the university’s needs and was created with university involvement. International House was also a reinforced concrete structure designed by George Kelham in his role as supervising architect of the University. It was designed to “reflect the

In the Depression years of the 1930s, not long after Bowles Hall and International House opened, efforts by the University community to build student housing took on a new urgency and a new level of organization. Stadtman suggested that the circumstances of the Depression awakened a social conscience among students. The pre-existing ASUC (student government) Welfare Committee turned from traditional concerns like student government and school spirit to “the dignity of students as human beings and . . . making the conditions of everyday living suitable to that estate,” including especially housing. These conditions and concerns gave rise to Berkeley’s first student cooperative boarding house in 1933 and subsequently to the University Students’ Cooperative Association. Cooperatives not only addressed the social need for housing but also the social goals of non-discrimination on the basis of race and religion, goals that students subsequently pressured the University to adopt for affiliated private living groups (such as fraternities and sororities) and for rental housing listed with the University. (Stadtman 1970: 290)

While the University had come to recognize “in recent years that housing conditions at the major campuses are not adequate . . . the Regents have not been able to remedy the situation because of lack of funds.” Early in 1937, President Sproul made an innovative proposal to the Regents for the financing of dormitories. This was rejected. (University Explorer 1938) Later that year, the Alumni Association took up the cause for university housing, gaining support from the Board of Regents in September. (University of California Board of Regents 1937) In November 1937, Rosalie Stern offered to donate $250,000 for a men’s dorm. In December 1937 and January 1938, Mrs. Stern’s son-in-law, Walter Haas, visited college campuses and met people in the east and midwest where “he studied intensively dormitory construction, housing problems and the methods of conducting [fund raising] campaigns.” (California Alumni Association 1938)

In February 1938, Walter Haas agreed to be chairman of the California Alumni Association Council’s Committee on Dormitories. Coincidentally in the same week that this was publicly announced, the Senior Class of the student body, “anxious, realizing the need for dormitories on the campus,” made an offer to fund the construction of dormitories through “one thousand life memberships in the Alumni Association from their class.” In the discussion of the Finance Committee of the Board of Regents that followed these announcements, President Sproul referred to the “tremendous pressure to provide dormitories.” At the same time, Regent Garrett McEnerny referred to what he called the position, “a very old one, that there are better uses of University moneys than the building of dormitories,” that if the State builds them, private donations will not come. (University of California Board of Regents Finance Committee 1938)
During the summer of 1938, the Alumni Committee on Dormitories and the University discussed a process for developing dormitories. This process included three principal issues: appropriate sites, plans, and financing. Sites under consideration were: “the areas north and west of the Greek Theater,” the Wilson Tract, “the area between College and Piedmont Avenues, north of Bancroft Way,” the Smyth Tract, the Oxford block, and “the possibility of acquiring areas now under private ownership, south of Bancroft Way and lying between Bancroft Way on the north, and Dwight Way on the south.” (Nichols 1938) A principal planning issue was whether to include a dining hall in the dorm or to build a central dining commons, which was more economical.

In this discussion, Luther Nichols, Comptroller of the University spoke about the appropriate scope of a dormitory building program:

> Because of the tremendous enrollment in the University, and the fact that heretofore it has been assumed that the fraternities, sororities, and the community would assume responsibility for the housing of students, the Regents should not accept responsibility for housing all students nor embark upon a program designed to accomplish this purpose. It seems to us that the policy of the Regents should be to provide standard housing only for those students who are unable to find safe and sanitary housing facilities in the community surrounding each station of the University.

Related to this idea, Nichols wrote that “superior or deluxe residence halls” should not be built by the University or the Alumni Association: “they should be left to private donors interested in providing excellent student accommodations or in memorializing the name of some individual.” (Nichols 1938a).

As part of the effort to plan for housing, various student surveys were undertaken in 1938 including one by the Housing Board of the Welfare Council at the University of California and another by Arthur Harris. The Housing Board study quoted the Building Commissioner of Berkeley as saying: “if the need were not so great, many of the homes now being used (by students) would have been closed long ago; however, to condemn any of these buildings would be to raise an acute problem to the status of a crisis.” (Anonymous 1941: 2) Another housing report stated: “Surveys taken over a period of the last five years have shown that many of the students are forced to live in quarters that are old, badly equipped, and below even the minimum standards of health and decency.” (Anonymous 1941: 2) These surveys identified the following types of student housing, mostly in Berkeley, but also in Oakland, San Francisco, Alameda, Richmond, and elsewhere: fraternities and sororities, dormitories, cooperatives, university-approved rooming and boarding houses, the homes of parents or other relatives, and
miscellaneous (apartments, hotels, unapproved rooming and boarding houses, and rooms in private residences). (Anonymous 1941: 4-5)

In efforts to finance student housing, in 1938 the University investigated various federal programs. Among these were “a Federal low-cost housing program that was not intended for students (Nichols 1938c), the W.P.A., and the possibility “to obtain low cost dormitories for men from the Federal Government through an arrangement whereby such dormitories would be available as barracks in the event of national mobilization.” (Robb 1938)

In September 1938, the Alumni Council asked the Regents to “approve a project for the construction of a Women’s Dormitory on the Berkeley Campus, housing not less than one hundred and fifty (150) students at a cost of not to exceed four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000).” (Nichols 1938b) Walter Haas pledged $20,000 toward this effort. (Haas 1938)

Following the decision to build a women’s dorm, the Alumni Association established a Women’s Dormitory Architectural Committee whose members were Mabel Clinch Tremoureux, Chair, Mrs. Robert Green, Mrs. Luther Nichols, Edith Slack, Dean Lucy Ward Stebbins, and Laura Titus. This committee made detailed recommendations about the design of a dorm to the University in letters and meetings in September and November 1938. It is not clear whether the committee saw preliminary plans in this period. A meeting on 29 November 1938 also included Arthur Brown, Jr., supervising architect of the University, Lawrence Kruse, an associate in his firm, and R.A. Weaver, an architect with the University’s Department of Buildings and Grounds.

At the end of 1938 there were two active proposals for new dormitories, a men’s dorm south of Bowles Hall to be built with money given by Rosalie Stern and a women’s dorm north of the Greek Theater to be built with money from the Alumni Association. Plans were prepared for the Stern men’s dorm by Corbett and Wurster and at least preliminary designs were made for the Alumni Association’s women’s dorm by Arthur Brown, Jr.

Then discovery of problems with the site of the proposed men’s dorm resulted in delays for both projects while geological investigations were conducted. Little work was done on either proposal during all of 1939. Ultimately, the Alumni Association project was abandoned, the Stern project was moved to the Alumni Association’s site north of the Greek Theater and in July 1940, the Stern project was changed from a men’s dorm to a women’s dorm.

The beginning of construction of Stern Hall was a welcome sign of progress, but it did not put an end to consideration of the University’s housing problems. For one thing, as Luther Nichols indirectly pointed out in 1938, this building provided “superior and de luxe” accommodations at
a cost comparable to the sororities and good residential clubs; it did not address the needs of lower income students who were in the greatest need.

Thus, as design and construction of Stern Hall were underway in 1940-1942, discussion of the housing situation continued. In 1940, the California Alumni Association prepared a report on “Dormitories for California.” In 1941, a comprehensive housing report (with no title or author) articulated a range of reasons for the University to provide student housing. These reasons had to do with health and safety, with convenience considering that many had long commutes, and equally with the role of the university in society as “a great training ground for citizenship”:

> Essential to the proper fulfillment of this social obligation and essential to the maximumization (sic) of the opportunities the University affords are adequate facilities for housing the students on or about the campus. Unless the paramount problem of student housing is solved, no expensive physical plant, no brilliant faculty, no understanding and efficient administration, will be able to contribute all that it is possible to contribute to the student and the community. Without adequate housing facilities the value of the University declines. It declines in direct proportion to the lack or inadequacy of housing.” (Anonymous 1941: 1-2)

The report supported these findings with reference to the work and writings of numerous social scientists. (Anonymous 1941: 23 ff.)

Recognition of concerns about student housing in Berkeley beyond those in the University community was expressed in a letter from the Berkeley League of Women Voters which formed a Housing Study Group and which took an interest in the Student Living Accommodations Committee of the Office of the President (Berkeley League of Women Voters 1941) The Living Accommodations Committee, consisting of Dean of Undergraduates, Herbert E. Stone, Dean Goldworthy, Mr. Mangold, and Catherine Bauer who was replaced by Professor of Architecture Howard Moise in its second year. The committee worked with the League of Women Voters to conduct a housing survey.

Following the opening of Stern Hall as the University’s first dormitory for women in October 1942, the issue of student housing receded for a time in the face of drastically diminished enrollment during the war and the critical need for housing of war-industry workers.

From a student population of 17,013 in 1940-1941, enrollment dropped to around 11,000 in 1943-1944, and rebounded to 18,262 in 1945-1946 and 25,272 in 1946-1947. To address this post-war housing need, the Fernwald residence halls for women students were built in 1945-1946, “the first use of public funds for student housing” in the UC system. (Stadtman 1967: 104)
This complex, on a private estate at the head of Dwight Way that had been donated to the University by its owner, William Smyth, was rushed to completion because the end of the War and the return of male veterans meant fraternities were reopening, and no longer able to house the women students who had lived in them during the War years. The Fernwald halls were designed by the Ratcliff firm and rushed to construction; one UC administrator characterized them as “90 day wonders” because of the speed with which they were completed and occupied. (Finacom 2008).

Built for women only three years after Stern Hall was completed, similarly located on a site elevated above the campus (although to the southeast) with a panoramic view, and also stylistically modern, Fernwald (or Smyth-Fernwald) and Stern had much in common. At the same time, while Stern was built of reinforced concrete for one hundred students and the details of its design were fussed over and scrutinized by its architects and donor, Fernwald was hastily built of wood and stucco for seven hundred students: “Driven by parameters of economy, speed of construction, and availability of materials” the completed complex had “the stripped down feeling of wartime housing — thin walls, flat roofs, replicated doorways and windows.” (Minor 2006: 92) Whereas Stern Hall was “de luxe” student housing, the purpose of Fernwald was to provide as much decent housing as possible for the largest number of people in a short period of time.

An Alumni Association planning study in 1948 followed by the 1951 Campus Plan Study by the University’s Office of Architects and Engineers proposed the purchase of property on the south side for “high-rise residence halls” and established a policy of the Regents to provide housing for 25% of the student population. Planning for these high rises was included in the 1956 Long Range Development Plan. (Helfand 2002: 25-26)

To provide for war veterans returning to school and their families, the University bought apartments that the Federal government had constructed on the University’s Gill Tract property in Albany, and leased others from the Housing Authority of Richmond. (Stadtman 1967: 104) These, like Fernwald, were stripped-down, typically one and two story, flat roofed, wood-frame apartment blocks.

As had been the case during the Depression of the 1930s, after World War II, the critical need for new housing was difficult to finance and little was done. By the mid 1950s, efforts were again underway to build dormitories, resulting in the completion of an addition to Stern Hall for 46 women in 1959 and in Residence Hall Units 1, 2, and 3 for 2,400 students on the south side in 1959, 1960, and 1964. In 1965, University Village in Albany was extensively expanded with more apartments. Over the past several years most to the older housing has been progressively
demolished and replaced with new apartment blocks, many of them in townhouse-style configurations.

Since the 1960s, the University has periodically added to the supply of student housing, including a second addition to Stern Hall for 110 women in 1979-1981, the acquisition and adaptation of Clark Kerr Campus for 825 students in 1982-1984, Foothill Student Housing for 800 students in 1989-1991. From 1986 to 1996 this added 3,100 beds to the housing supply, plus the Manville Apartments for 123 graduate students in 1993-1995. In the early 21st century the Underhill Area projects added two new residence halls and four, free-standing, apartment buildings to the campus housing supply in the Southside neighborhood, as well as a centralized dining commons replacing the Units I and II commons facilities.

During this same time period much of the existing housing, including Units I, II, and II and portions of the Clark Kerr campus, have undergone physical, programmatic, and seismic upgrades.

The completion of the Foothill complex meant that the Berkeley campus was, for the first time in its history, able to offer guaranteed housing to all freshmen students. Some of the later additions to the housing stock – particularly the recent Ida Jackson Graduate House at College and Durant Avenues – were also targeted at older student populations.

**DESIGNERS AND BUILDERS**

**William W. Wurster** (1895-1973) born in Stockton, California, earned his undergraduate degree in architecture from the University of California, Berkeley. During the 1930s Wurster won national recognition for his residential design. While distinctly Modern, his designs also drew on the California vernacular and Bay Area architectural traditions, emphasizing function over formal organization, the use of simple materials and construction methods, and the integration of the building with its site. By the late-thirties, when work began on Stern Hall, the Wurster office had designed over two hundred houses. (Hille, 1994)

Wurster seems to have come to the attention of Rosalie Stern from several different directions. Her brother, Eugene Meyer, editor of the *Washington Post* newspaper approached Harvey Wiley Corbett in New York to recommend a younger architect in the Bay Area who was working in the Modernist idiom. Although personally unknown to Corbett, by the late 1930s Wurster had established a reputation and was already well published. Wurster had already designed houses for socially prominent Northern Californians and the Yerba Buena Club at the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition (G.G.I.E.) on Treasure Island, which functioned as a center at the fair for the social elite. The building designed by William Wurster with interior decoration by
Frances Elkins and landscape design by Isabella Worn was well received. The same three designers would collaborate again on the design of Stern Hall.

At the completion of construction of Stern Hall in 1941, with war declared and shortages of materials and labor, Wurster closed his architectural office and relocated to the East Coast for post-graduate study in regional planning at Harvard. He become a leader in architectural education, serving as the Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at M.I.T. (1944-1950) and Chairman of the Department of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley (1950-1959). Wurster was among the founders of the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley and its first dean (1959-1963). The building that houses the College of Environmental Design, Wurster Hall, is named for William Wurster.

Wurster was a principal partner in the San Francisco firm, Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Architects, and was awarded the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects in 1972 for his body of work.

Wurster met and married Catherine Bauer (1905-1964) during the period he was designing Stern Hall. While no specific reference to her influence on the design of Stern Hall was found while compiling this report, it is worth considering that Catherine, who was a noted housing specialist, and was teaching a class on housing at the University of California when she and Wurster met, may have had at least some casual input on the design. Both Bauer, and Wurster had traveled independently through Western Europe in 1937 and shown particular interest in the new social housing projects of Germany, Scandinavia, and France. Wurster and Bauer did not meet at that time, but Catherine met and formed a friendship with Wurster’s good friend and collaborator, landscape architect Thomas Church that year while traveling in France.

Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873-1954), a native Californian and the son of San Francisco physicians, graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1896 with a degree in Engineering. He was one of a small group including Arthur Brown, Jr., Edward H. Bennett, and Julia Morgan who took classes in architecture from Bernard Maybeck in 1894. Corbett studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in the atelier of Jean Louis Pascal. In 1900 he received his diplome and returned to the U.S. to practice architecture in New York City, working first in the office of Cass Gilbert. Partners included F. Livingston Pell, Frank J. Helmele, Wallace K. Harrison, and William H. MacMurray. Corbett was on the design team for Rockefeller Center (1928-1937) and chair of the architectural committee for the 1933 Chicago Fair.

Corbett was best known for his work on skyscrapers in New York City, both the theoretical and artistic theory that underlay skyscraper design and the design of several notable buildings as well, including the 1918 Bush Tower, the 1929 Roerich Museum (now the Masters Apartments),
the 1931 10 Park Avenue, and the 1932 North Building of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Outside of New York, his best known works were the monumental George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia and Bush House in London, which won praise and honors from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). In the early 1920s, Corbett worked with Hugh Ferriss on what became highly influential studies of the possibilities for skyscraper design based on the 1916 setback zoning law. Later, he designed utopian images of modern cities consisting of skyscrapers and layers of roadways high above the ground. His New York Times obituary described him as “An ardent and sometimes almost lyric supporter of the skyscraper in big cities.” (New York Times 1954a) In an editorial, the Times began: “One can look out of almost any window in Manhattan and see a building designed by Harvey Wiley Corbett…He remained to the closing years a man youthful in his great enthusiasms. His vitality was contagious, his ideas stimulating.” (New York Times 1954b)

At the time of his collaboration with William W. Wurster on Stern Hall, Corbett was busy with two major projects that reflect his thinking at that time. He was chairman of the advisory committee of architects for the New York World’s Fair of 1939, whose principal role was the choice of the theme of the fair – “Building the World of Tomorrow”. The futuristic mood of the fair was expressed in the symbol of the fair, the Trylon and Perisphere, and in exhibits such as the Road of Tomorrow, the Town of Tomorrow, and Futurama. At the same time, he was working on the design of the New York Criminal Courts Building and Men’s House of Detention, known as the Tombs. This building was named for the first “tombs”, an Egyptian Revival prison that once stood nearby. Corbett’s building has been described as “a ziggurated construction overlaid with stylish detail of the 1930s: Art Moderne, as at the Paris Exposition of 1937.” (White & Willensky 2000: 73-74)

Frances Adler Elkins (1888-1953) was an influential interior decorator known for her daring use of color and patterns. Her eclectic designs freely combined different styles and periods, and expensive with inexpensive materials. Elkins had no formal design training, but gained experience through collaborative projects with her brother, the renowned Chicago architect, David Adler (1882-1949). Elkins establish a successful practice, with offices in Monterey and San Francisco. During a long career she furnished the interiors of many of San Francisco’s social elite including the Folger, Crocker, Zellerbach, Stern, and Haas families.

Elkins designed the interiors for the Yerba Buena Club for Women at the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. The club, designed by William Wurster, served as a focal point for San Francisco’s social elite. Rosalie Meyer Stern was a charter member of the club. The building and its interiors, published in House & Garden in 1939, secured the reputations of both the architect and interior designer.
While traveling in Europe with her brother, Elkins “met several avant-garde artisans who would become hallmarks of modern art and design, most notably the French interior decorator and furniture designer Jean-Michel Frank (1895-1941) and the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) who designed fixtures for Frank. Elkins ‘advanced their careers’ through her decorating business and was Frank’s exclusive representative in the United States. She was one of the first decorators to use his design for a table that became known as the Parsons table, and she also had a first model of a Giacometti lamp, which allowed her to copy the sculptor’s work.” (Salney, 2005: 9). Elkins utilized the Frank parsons tables in the Living Room and Dining Room of Stern Hall and Giacometti light fixtures in the Library.

Textile designer **Dorothy Liebes** (1899-1972) with studios in San Francisco and New York, was known for her bold use of color and unusual textures and materials such as grass, leather, metal wire, plastic and sequins. Liebes served as the Director of Decorative Arts for the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition. Her work includes the Paramount Theatre, Oakland, and rooms at the Plaza Hotel and United Nations in New York. Liebes’ textiles were often incorporated into the interiors designed by Frances Elkins, and were used for the upholstery, curtains, and throw pillows in the public rooms of Stern Hall.

Floral designer **Isabella Austin Worn** (1871-1950) was born on 4 March 1871 into a pioneering Marin County family who had a multi-generational interest in horticulture. The towns of Ross and Ross Valley were named for her grandfather, James Ross, who came to California from Australia during the Gold Rush. He established a successful wholesale liquor business in San Francisco and then, in 1852, purchased the 8,800-acre Rancho Punta de Quentin in Marin County from Benjamin Buckelew for $50,000 in gold coin. Ross’s oldest daughter, Annie Ross, married George Austin Worn in 1863, and Isabella was one of their five children. Worn came to California in 1849 and formed a partnership known as Waterman and Worn that was “one of the best known produce firms of early days” (San Francisco Call 1895). According to his obituary, in the *San Francisco Call* in 1895, Worn “accumulated a handsome fortune which was augmented when he married the daughter of the late James D. Ross, after which Ross Valley is named” (San Francisco Call 1895). George and Annie Worn were given 21 acres of land by her father and built an estate that they named Sunnyside. The couple planted trees and exotic plants on the grounds, and according to the Marin Art and Garden Center’s website, these included specimens from their travels abroad. In 1879, the family moved from Sunnyside to their ranch in San Anselmo, and in 1882, due to strained finances, sold Sunnyside. The Sunnyside house was destroyed by fire in 1931, but the site is the present-day home of the Marin Art and Garden Center (Jose Moya del Pino Library/Ross Historical Society 2006). (A garden located next to the Octagon House at the center is dedicated to Isabella Worn and her sisters [Perry 1976].)
Miss Worn spent her childhood at her family’s estate (Sunnyside) in Ross and at the ranch in San Anselmo where she attended private schools. She and her two sisters, Grace Worn and Annie Worn Perry, showed a flair for floral design in the arrangements that they prepared for their home and for St. John’s Episcopal Church in Ross. At the urging of friends, they opened a “consultation room” under the name “The Misses Worn” at 163 Sutter Street in San Francisco in 1896. (A fourth sister, Louise Worn Beales, was not involved in the business.) “In short order they were receiving commissions not only from the most prominent and affluent families in the vicinity but from hotels, clubs and chic organizations . . . The Worns’ style was imaginative and was revolutionary for their period. They detested stiff bouquets and planned their arrangements to appear ‘natural’.” The sisters did not operate as a traditional florist. There were no flowers in their Sutter Street establishment. Clients did not “order” flowers or tell the sisters what they wanted but would place themselves totally in the hands of the sisters’ creative process. They provided the Misses Worn with information on the type of event they were planning, where it was to be held, how many people would be entertained, and how much money could be spent. “The Worns took it from there. Most hostesses never knew in advance exactly what to expect” (Robbins 1965). For 54 years, the Worns were an institution in San Francisco and provided floral designs to several generations of the Bay Area’s most prominent families. After Grace Worn’s death, Isabella Worn and Annie Perry continued to work together until Isabella’s death in November 1950. Perry, who declined to reopen the business following her sister’s death, died just two months later on 20 January 1951 (Robbins 1965 and State of California).

Isabella was cited in various sources as the driving force of the business. She was described as “very decisive” and as someone who knew “exactly what she wanted.”

Toichi Domoto, in an oral history of his long career in the Bay Area nursery business, explained how he thought her personality helped her business:

She had a certain way she had to go and it would either be Miss Worn’s way or no other way . . . I think when you are dealing with society league people that are spoiled—not all, but a lot of them have had their way and they want their way or rather they think they know what they want—to be able to go in there and tell them, “No, that’s not the way it should go, [it should go] this way,” and to do it and get by with it, you have to have the personality that she did in order to be able to do it . . . I think she was a good psychologist. But inside she was a very warm person (Domoto 1993: 450).

She was also considered the creative force in the business, and in her obituaries, the descriptions of various memorable and innovative designs were attributed to her. These included the party honoring President McKinley, the Palace Hotel’s Golden Anniversary in 1900 when President Theodore Roosevelt was the honored guest, the first ball inaugurating the opening of the new
Palace Hotel in 1909, and the hotel’s Diamond Jubilee Ball in 1950. She was known for her knowledge of plants and for her “ability to create elaborate designs with a unique blend of color combinations” (Egan 199: 220). At the reception honoring Theodore Roosevelt, in 1900, her work was described as “an eye catching garland of lights and flowers, reading ‘The Land of Sunshine, Fruits and Flowers’ that encircled the room” (Robbins 1965). She created an oriental garden, lake “and all” in the center of the dinner table for one event and a “growing field of buttercups” for another (SF Examiner 1950). On occasions her work extended outside of the Bay Area and included the “Marshall Field wedding in Chicago,” the funeral of architect David Adler in Chicago in 1949, and the reopening of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu after World War II (Marin Independent Journal 1950, Robbins 1965, and Salny 2002: 20).

In addition to her work as an interior floral designer, Worn worked on the planting design for a number of gardens in the Bay Area. Although only limited information on this aspect of her career was located, in the cases where information was found, Worn appears to have worked at selecting and obtaining plants in collaboration with the landscape designer or to have designed the arrangement of the perennials and annuals in the garden. Her obituaries alluded to her work on gardens in a number of unidentified landscapes (i.e., “Occasionally, too, Miss Worn extended her flower arranging into the place where flowers grow and landscaped some of the outstanding gardens in the Bay Area, particularly in the Peninsula [San Francisco Chronicle 1950].”) During the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, she collaborated on a number of notable garden designs: with artist Bruce Porter on the landscape designs at the William Crocker home, New Place, in Hillsborough and at the William Bourn estate, Filoli (she continued her relationship at Filoli until her death in 1950); with architect David Adler and his sister, the interior designer Frances Elkins (a personal friend of Worn’s) at Celia Clark’s House-on-Hill in Hillsborough; and with architect Julia Morgan at San Simeon (Domoto 1993: 453; Egan 1998: 212, 220; San Mateo Times 1976; Slany 2001: 120). (Nurseryman Toichi Domoto remembered Worn coming with Morgan to his father’s nursery to select plants for San Simeon. In describing a common practice during the early decades of the 20th century when nurserymen purchased and removed mature trees from private owners to resell, he remembered Worn traveling around San Leandro “picking up a lot of trees in the yards that were available . . . quite often we would go in there to buy something and then they would say, “It’s already sold.” I would say, “Who bought it?” “I don’t know, some lady came and bought it.” Almost invariably of course she [Worn] would pay more than we would because . . . that was the time that San Simeon was being developed” [Domoto 1993: 453].) In 1938 and 1939, Worn supervised the creation of the gardens, installed by various Bay Area garden clubs, for the Yerba Buena Clubhouse on Treasure Island. William Wurster was the architect and Frances Elkins was the interior decorator for the clubhouse, which was meant to be a center for women’s activities at the Golden Gate International Exposition (Oakland Tribune 1938).
Worn maintained her ties to Marin County and made her home at 38 Ross Avenue in Ross for over 50 years. She never married but was actively involved in the lives of her extended family. When her great-nephew Donald Perry was sent to live with his grandmother, Annie Perry, and Worn when his sister contracted polio, Worn “was the one that took over” and became a “second mother” to him (Perry 1976: 6). (Perry continued in the family’s horticultural tradition and established Sunnyside Nursery in San Anselmo in 1940. He named the nursery for his grandparent’s estate in Ross. The nursery continues in business today under the direction of Perry’s grandsons [Sunnyside Nursery].) Worn continued to work until she was stricken with a heart attack in early November 1950. She had just completed the decoration of the War Memorial Building for the San Francisco Opera Guild’s “Intermission Dinner” on October 27 and was consulting with Mrs. Norman Livermore, president of the Marin Art and Garden Center, on the development of the gardens at the center. (Worn suggested planting redwoods around the “sequoia tree now standing at the center, in an effort to keep a wild look to the grounds, where she grew up as a child” [Marin Independent Journal 1950].) She died on 10 November at the Ross General Hospital.

Although, Isabella Worn’s name is not well known today, during her lifetime she was considered an innovative and influential floral designer who became, over the course of her 54-year career, a San Francisco institution. In 1953, a grove of redwood trees at the Prairie Creek State Park was named the “Isabella Worn Grove” in her honor (Robbins 1965 and Save-the-Redwoods League 2006).

**John William Gregg** (1880-1969) was born in Weare, New Hampshire on 8 January 1880. He attended the Massachusetts Agricultural College (today the University of Massachusetts) where he became the student of Frank Waugh, an influential author and educator who helped to shape the development of teaching of landscape architecture during the early 20th century. After his graduation in 1904 (he also received a degree at the same time from Boston University), Gregg worked at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (also known as the St. Louis World’s Fair) and then briefly as a landscape designer for a nursery in Texas. He then moved to Nebraska where he was the landscape manager for the private estate of J. Sterling Morton (whose family owned Morton salt) from 1904 to 1907. He began his long career as an educator as an instructor at the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School in Woodbine, New Jersey in 1907. Then in 1910, at the recommendation of his teacher and mentor Frank Waugh, he moved to Pennsylvania to establish a department of floriculture and landscape design at Pennsylvania State College. The department was located within the College of Agriculture whose dean was Forsyth Hunt. When Hunt moved to the University of California at Berkeley as Dean of the College of Agriculture, he invited Gregg to come there and establish a similar department. Gregg arrived at the University in 1913 and remained there as a full professor and the director of the Division of Landscape Gardening.
and Floriculture (the predecessor to the University’s Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Design in the College of Environmental Design). As part of his service for the University, Gregg worked with the Agricultural Extension Service and served in an informal arrangement as the landscape architect for the University’s various campuses throughout the state. In an oral history of his career in 1965, Gregg explained that in this role he was generally called in after plans and designs for buildings were underway and his role consisted of providing advice or sketches related to the landscape design (Gregg 1965: 122). He also served as a consultant on grading, planting, and “allied uses” for the Bureau of Reclamation’s All American Canal project in 1935. Although, his work in education was the primary focus of his career, Gregg was actively involved in local planning and landscape development. He was appointed to the original Berkeley Park Commission (and served for a time as its president) and was a member of the Berkeley Civic Art Commission and the Alameda County Planning Commission. He belonged to the Rotary Club and was a 32nd degree Mason and member of the Durant Lodge No. 268 in Berkeley. Following his retirement from the University, he continued to live in Berkeley (at 705 The Alameda) where his main activity was “answering fool questions of a lot of friends who want to know if this will grow here and if not what will” (Gregg 1965: 169). He was awarded an honorary doctorate in landscape architecture from the University of Massachusetts in 1949 and was interviewed about his career in 1965 as part of the University of California’s Regional Cultural History Project. Gregg died on 19 August 1969 in Berkeley at the age of 89 (Gregg 1965: 173 and State of California).

Augustus V. Saph, Jr. (1896-1966) was a structural engineer (and the son of a structural engineer). He graduated from the University of California in 1917. After graduation he designed heavy foundations for the California & Hawaiian Sugar Refinery in Crockett. During World War I he built “all types of yard structures” for the Public Works Department of Mare Island Navy Yard and attended officers submarine school at Annapolis. After the war he worked for his father. He took over his father’s practice after his death in February 1920 and maintained a private practice in San Francisco for 45 years. From 1926-1931 he was a professor of civil engineering at St. Mary’s College. He was a founder and past president of the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California (Oakland Tribune 1966) and Chairman of the Building Industry Conference Board. By 1938, Saph’s principal projects included plants and facilities for mining, lumber, and water projects in the western states and Canada; two Reservoir Outlet Towers at Stanford University “with special earthquake consideration”; “special analysis work for Posey Tube”; and four buildings – the Zellerbach Paper Company warehouse in Oakland, the Fresno Y.W.C.A., an extension and addition to the Whitney Building at 133 Geary Street in San Francisco, and the Spreckels School near Salinas.
It is not known if he worked with Wurster before Stern Hall. Afterwards he worked with the Wurster firm on the Schuckl & Company canneries in Sunnyvale (1942) and Niles (1945).

George Metcalf Simonson (1890-1978) graduated from the University of California in 1912. He worked as an electrical engineer for the State Department of Engineering in Sacramento before establishing a private practice as a consulting engineer. Simonson lived in Piedmont and maintained his practice in San Francisco.

By 1938, Simonson’s work, which usually included heating, air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical systems, consisted of many prominent schools, hospitals, churches, courthouses, college buildings, office buildings, and exposition buildings. Among his best-known individual projects were the Paramount Theater, the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange, the Alameda County Courthouse, the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco, and Edwards Stadium at the University of California. He had also worked with Wurster on two sororities at the University of California and on the First Congregational Church in Stockton.

Diego Rivera (1886-1957) is widely considered to be one of the most important Mexican painters of the 20th Century, and is credited with reintroducing fresco painting into modern art and architecture. Rivera’s large, dynamic murals on public buildings in Mexico and the United States address themes of history and technological progress. His original painting style and radical ideas had an impact on international art, particularly on public art in the US through the work of WPA artists during the 1930s.

Among Rivera’s most significant murals are those he executed in Mexico City at the National Palace (1929-30, 1935) and the Palacio de Bellas Artes (1934); in Detroit at the Detroit Institute of Art (1932-33); and in San Francisco at the Pacific Stock Exchange (1931), the California School of Fine Arts – now the San Francisco Art Institute – (1931), and the Golden Gate International Exposition (1940). Between completing the Pacific Stock Exchange mural and beginning the California School of Fine Arts mural, Rivera and his wife, the painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), were guests at the Atherton home of Rosalie Stern. It was during that short period of rest that Rivera painted the small mural now in Stern Hall at UC, Berkeley. That same year, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City held a retrospective exhibition of Rivera’s work (November 1931).

Rivera and Kahlo, were outspoken Communists and prominent political figures. Rivera’s radical public statements and references in his art to Communism drew controversy, most notably with his 1933 mural, “Man at the Crossroads” at Rockefeller Center in New York, that featured a prominent portrait of Lenin. Before completion, work was stopped and the mural was destroyed.
in 1934 by the same developers (among them Nelson Rockefeller) that had commissioned the work.

Figure 39: 1930, Diego Rivera at work painting the Stern Mural in the Atherton Home of Rosalie Stern. The mural was installed in the lower Lobby of Stern Hall in 1956.

Source: Photo by Ansel Adams, image from (Hurlburt, 1989: 113)
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