

Crestwood Hills Association

Dear Homeowner,

On behalf of the Crestwood Hills Association Board, I would like to welcome you to our community. We hope the accompanying materials provide you with an entertaining and educational look into the history of our neighborhood as well as useful contact information.

The Crestwood Hills Association has always been an active advocate for the interests of the neighborhood and maintaining its tranquil quality of life. Over the years we have been instrumental in preventing roads from connecting Mulholland Drive to Kenter Avenue, preventing the construction of a county dump in a neighboring canyon, and lobbying for improvements to our streets and park. We ask that you show your support for the Crestwood Hills Association (CHA) by paying your dues on a regular basis. Your \$100 payment helps the CHA accomplish many things. *Among them:*

- > We support the Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) attached to the deed of each property in our neighborhood, and assist our architectural committees and tree committees to that end;
- > We publish the Crestwood Hills Views Newsletter and Directory, and maintain the *crestwoodhills.com* website;
- > We maintain a preferential enrollment agreement for CHA members' children with the Crestwood Hills Cooperative Preschool (founded by Crestwood Hills residents);
- > We finance and coordinate annual brush clearance and tree trimming in neighborhood common areas;
- > We maintain a seat on the board of the Brentwood Community Council and represent our neighborhood's interest to city and county officials;
- > We organize neighborhood gatherings and social events, including an annual block party;
- > We maintain a fascinating archive. [Did you know that Crestwood Hills won an American Institute of Architects design award? That Crestwood Hills homes have been featured in many architectural tours, with several established as Cultural/Historic Monuments with the City of Los Angeles?]

As always, the Board welcomes your input and involvement. Crestwood Hills can be as vibrant as its members choose. Let your voice be heard.

Regards,

Kate Blackman
President

Welcome to the neighborhood! The Welcome Committee members delivering this packet will try to answer your questions and introduce you to our community. Crestwood Hills is not just another neighborhood in Los Angeles. It's much, much more.

There's no place like Crestwood Hills. It truly is a dream come true. It was conceived, planned, developed and built by your neighbors. There was a tremendous housing shortage after World War II, and Los Angeles was swamped with returning servicemen. In 1946, four friends, all musicians and recently discharged from the Army, had an idea. Together, they would buy an acre of land, build homes at the four corners and have a communal pool and playground in the center. Together they could purchase what they could not afford individually. It was a wonderful concept. Many had similar dreams, but only one community made it work—*Crestwood Hills*.

Soon, the original four turned into a dozen, and the dozen grew to be more than 500. A nonprofit corporation called Mutual Housing Association was formed. All of the members owned shares in the corporation and would eventually obtain a housing site. After looking at several properties, Mutual Housing purchased land in Kenter Canyon. The next step was hiring an architectural team to develop modern housing—no colonials or

Tudors here. The housing was also to be sensitive to the hillside terrain.

Three men were selected (over such figures as Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra and John Lautner) to design the homes—A. Quincy Jones, Whitney Smith and Edgardo Contini. All three became leading lights and internationally known. Their designs were so unique and so far ahead of their time that the Federal Housing Administration would not approve mortgages in Crestwood Hills. A delegation had to be sent to Washington, DC to convince the bureaucrats to allow funding. (Of the 350 homes in Crestwood Hills, less than 100 recognizable original designs remain. We're working on ways to preserve them.)

After much struggle, the homes were built and Mutual Housing Association, having served its purpose, turned into the Crestwood Hills Association. Instead of the community owning the homes and land, with the members owning shares in Mutual Housing (the initial plan), individuals took title. However, the communal ideal never quite left. The Crestwood Hills pioneers (some of

whom still live here) purchased this land, hired a design team, obtained financing, hired contractors, opened a credit union, built a preschool, donated a park to the city and created a community for themselves and for us—their successors.

The stories of Crestwood Hills are endless (the Bel Air fire, the Hollywood Ten, the Mutual Withdrawees) and some of your neighbors are historians of this place. Crestwood Hills has been the subject of many magazine and journal articles, and books, and won architectural and planning awards. We even maintain a fascinating historical archive in the park. If you want to learn more, just ask.

Your Neighborhood Association

Your neighborhood association is the Crestwood Hills Association. Dues are \$100 per household, per year. The welcome committee is part of your Association. We also have a social committee, which holds an annual softball game, and a website with all

of the most current information. Visit us anytime at www.crestwoodhills.com.

Your Architectural Committees

You have probably seen the signs as you drive into Crestwood Hills—"An Architecturally Controlled Community." Don't be afraid; it's a good thing. Otherwise Crestwood Hills would be plagued by gigantic stucco boxes, sully hillsides and blocking neighbor's views.

For information on working with Crestwood Hills CC&Rs and tree guidelines, including an FAQ, check out the *Renovation* section in your welcome packet.

Some Final Words

Welcome to the community. You've come to a place where you will soon know your neighbors. We are very proud of Crestwood Hills and cherish its past and future.

We hope you will too!

Visit www.crestwoodhills.com/dues to register for the community newsletter and notices; find more information on architectural and tree guidelines; and learn about community events.

You can also pay your dues online by visiting www.crestwoodhills.com/dues.

Mutual Housing Association, Los Angeles, 1946-1950

Whitney R. Smith, A. Quincy Jones, architects, and Edgardo Contini, engineer

Excerpt from *A. Quincy Jones*, by Cory Buckner

The experimental forms of the Mutual Housing Association (MHA) set a standard for excellence in postwar tract-home development. The development's founders took a bold approach toward creating a cooperative community, resulting in houses that offered young families an opportunity to experience modern architecture within a modest budget.

After World War II, in 1946, four musicians formed the Cooperative Housing Group as a viable way to obtain inexpensive houses by pooling their resources. The housing shortage for returning servicemen and the excitement of creating a model community through cooperative methods were foremost in the minds of the original founders. By combining their resources, the four families could afford such luxuries as a swimming pool and an expansive garden. They mentioned their plan to a few friends and soon found they had twenty-five people interested in the idea. Articles ran in the *Hollywood Citizen-News* and other newspapers, creating an interest that boosted the group's membership to five hundred. The group purchased eight hundred acres in the Santa Monica Mountains

in an area of Brentwood now known as Crestwood Hills. The tract in the Santa Monica Mountains was designed to be in keeping with the communal spirit. Land was designated as both private and public, with acreage set aside for a park, preschool, gas station, and grocery store.

Shortly after purchasing the land the founders interviewed architects, including Richard Neutra. The original contract draft was a joint venture between Jones, Whitney R. Smith, and Jones's former employer, Douglas Honnold. John Lautner, an associate of Honnold's, architect Francis Lockwood, engineer Edgardo Contini, and landscape architect Garrett Eckbo were also involved in the early stages of the project. Honnold turned over the project to Jones and Smith when personal problems made it impossible for him to continue. The final team for the project consisted of Jones, Smith, and Contini, with architects Jim Charlton and Wayne Williams working as draftsmen with design input. Williams, Jones, and Contini also became members of the Association.

The team drew up ten sets of plans but was sent back to the drawing board



Crestwood Hills groundbreaking with a plant nursery in the background.

after the Association deemed the plans too modern. They returned with fifteen additional plans for modestly priced houses designed with a simple exposed structure and materials. The architects presented a booklet, "Mutual Plans," consisting of twenty-eight house designs, to the Association in 1948. The Association then began a series of meetings to determine which houses it would select as models for the development. Eventually, eight of the plans were constructed.

With their own funds Jones and Smith purchased an inexpensive hillside lot in Mt. Washington, a section of Los Angeles adjacent to downtown, to build a pilot house for the project. The house, Model 102, made out of concrete-block

masonry and wood, was built in 1950 with a rectangular floor plan at a cost of \$16,700. A framework of structural ribs and posts extended across the entire floor plan, in-filled with panels of glass across the view wall. The main roof echoed the slope of the hillside and a secondary roof created a clerestory of operable plywood panels. The house gave the members of the Association an opportunity to experience firsthand the architect's sweeping design for the hillside home.

Similar to the pilot house, the first structure built by the cooperative was to be used as the site office for the architects. Adjacent to the architects' site office was the sales office, which later became the cooperative preschool.

Crestwood Hills

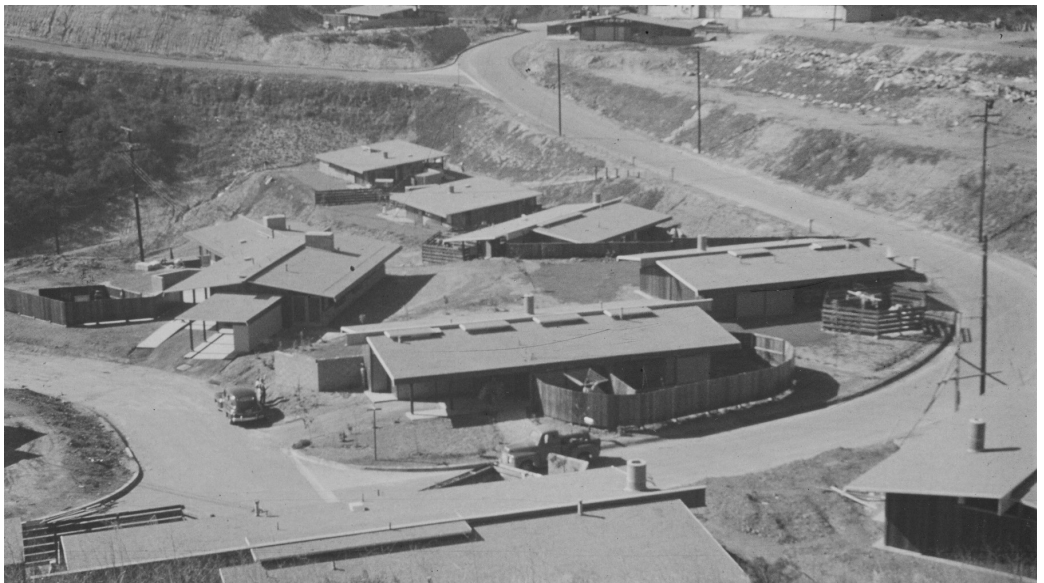
An early proposal also suggested the creation of a communal plant nursery, a doctor's office, and several other community services to be clustered together near the area designated for a park. The local Federal Housing Authority (FHA) reluctantly approved the plans for the cooperative services as an experimental effort only; the Authority feared that other communities would propose similar amenities. Once families settled into the neighborhood, however, the cooperative spirit ebbed, crowded out by the day-to-day tasks of raising a family and the financial burden of furnishing and landscaping their own homes. With the exception of the park and preschool, the remaining communal facilities were

never completed. Nevertheless, MHA did prove to become the only successful housing cooperative in the state of California.

The site planning of the Mutual Housing Association was unique for its time. Houses were positioned at odd angles to the street instead of lined up in a row, the latter the typical arrangement of many postwar tract developments. Each house site was oriented to respect the privacy of the neighboring houses, and owners were encouraged to plant six-foot-high hedges at each side yard to provide additional privacy from house to house.

Out of the five hundred lots proposed, 160 houses were built accordingly to

Grouping of MHA houses on Rochedale Lane, part of the first thirty houses built in 1948.



MHA designs. The houses are finished with materials in their natural state: concrete block, redwood siding, exposed Douglas fir plywood and tongue-and-groove ceiling planks, with no applied plaster or paint. The glass walls give a sensation of free-flowing space, making a 1,200-square-foot house seem twice the size by extending the sight line to the property line. Eight-foot-wide sliding glass doors dissolve the boundary between house and garden. The exposed composite posts and built-up beams act as rhythmic ornament throughout the house. Beams march across the structure like a series of ribs, which, combined with a low-pitched roof, emphasize the horizontality of the houses. Despite the use of a module and standard sliding door sizes, constructing

each house proved to be time-consuming. Composite beams had to fit composite posts exactly, and odd-shaped clerestory window glass could only be ordered once framing had been completed, causing a delay in construction time. Two different contractors went bankrupt during construction of the houses, leaving many homeowners with plans but no way of constructing them in an efficient manner.

In 1952, the AIA gave the Award of Merit to 500 Home Community, Brentwood, California. The Bel Air fire of 1961 destroyed approximately sixty of the MHA houses. Over time, demolition and extensive remodeling have further destroyed all but thirty-one of the original houses.

Read more:

Crestwood Hills: The Chronicle of a Modern Utopia
by Cory Buckner
Published by Angel
City Press, 2015

A. Quincy Jones: Building for Better Living
by Brooke Hodges
Published by The
Hammer Museum
in conjunction with an
exhibition of the same
name, 2013

A. Quincy Jones
by Cory Buckner
Published by
Phaidon Press, 2002

Crestwood Hills

Crestwood Hills Association

986 Hanley Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049
www.crestwoodhills.com

The Crestwood Hills Association represents nearly 350 homes in the Brentwood area. Dues are \$100 per year, per household.

CHA Board of Directors:

Kate Blackman, *President*
John Haley, *President*
Robert Plotkowski, *Treasurer*
Bruce Kaplan, *Secretary*
Shel Brucker
Cory Buckner
Greg Ferkel
Lauri Gaffin
Barbara Levin
Mike Odenheimer
James White

Crestwood Hills Architectural Committee

Plans for all exterior changes must be submitted for approval. Please check your deed or property tax bill to determine in which tract you live.

Tracts 14944, 14122 and 15095

Gregory Serrao
Robert Hensley
Michael Palladino

Send submissions to:

CHAC
c/o Gregory Serrao, AIA
1068 Hanley Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90049
gserraoaia@yahoo.com
310.471.7517

Crestwood Hills Park

1000 Hanley Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(310) 472-5233

The beautiful public park in our neighborhood includes a clubhouse, outdoor theater, dog walking areas, playground, picnic and barbecue areas, baseball diamond and basketball court.

Crestwood Hills Preschool

986 Hanley Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(310) 472-1566
www.crestwoodhillscoop.org
Joanna Port, *Director*

A private, cooperative preschool—one of the best in Los Angeles. Founded by Crestwood Hills residents and offering enrollment priority to dues-paying Crestwood Hills Association members.

Tumbleweed Camp

Located at the far end of the park, at 1024 Hanley Avenue
P.O. Box 49291
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(310) 472-7474
www.tumbleweedcamp.com

A private, children's day camp offering swimming, horseback riding, gymnastics and more. Also available for parties.

Kenter Canyon Elementary School

645 North Kenter Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Crestwood Hills residents can take advantage of an easement (a sidewalk) connecting Hanley Avenue with Leonard Road, allowing children a safe shortcut on their walk to our local public school.

Donald Bruce Kaufman Public Library

11820 San Vicente Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(310) 575-8273

Nearest Post Office

200 South Barrington Avenue (2 blocks south of Sunset, east side)

Representation:

City Councilmember
Mike Bonin, *11th District*
200 N. Spring Street, #415
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 473-7011
councilmember.bonin@lacity.org

County Supervisor

Sheila Kuehl,
(D) 3rd District
821 Kenneth Hahn
Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-3333
sheila@bos.lacounty.gov

State Assemblymember

Richard Bloom,
(D) District 50
District Office:
2800 28th Street, Suite 150
Santa Monica, CA 90405
(310) 450-0041

State Senator

Senator Ben Allen,
(D) District 26
District Office:
2512 Artesia Blvd., #320
Redondo Beach, CA 90278
(310) 318-6994

U.S. Congressman

Ted Lieu,
(R) 33rd District
5055 Wilshire Boulevard,
Suite 310
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 651-1040

U.S. Senators

Dianne Feinstein, *(D)*
11111 Santa Monica Blvd.,
Suite 915
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 914-7300

Kamala Harris, *(D)*
312 N. Spring Street,
Suite 1748
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 894-5000

Architectural Planning and Submissions FAQ: There are special CC&Rs (conditions, covenants and restrictions) in the deed to your property, placing you within the review and oversight of an architectural committee.

As your realtor and seller have told you, the CC&Rs are binding legal obligations. You may not build or alter without approval. If you wish to alter the outside of your home, you need to submit plans to the architectural committee for your tract. The architectural committee has guidelines to make things easier for you and your architect, which can be found at www.crestwoodhills.com/cc-and-rs or by contacting the architectural committee members listed in the *Resources* section for more information.

The philosophy behind the architectural committees is simple and we believe, necessary. Crestwood Hills homes should blend into the beautiful hillside landscape, should not interfere with the views of their neighbors and should be in harmony with the rest of the neighborhood. The architectural committee members are volunteers with a difficult job. Please try to work with them.

Visit www.crestwoodhills.com/cc-and-rs to download guidelines..

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