



Orinda

Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District

Monday, Dec. 8, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office, 8 Altarinda Road,
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report, Oct. 26-Nov. 8

Alarms 16
911 calls 5

Burglary, Residential

40 block Oakwood Rd
Rabble Rd/Wilder Rd

Burglary, Auto

Nation's
Wagner Ranch Elementary

Burglary, Commercial

70 block Moraga Wy

Disturbing the Peace

50 block Van Ripper Ln

Hit & Run

Miner Rd/Brookbank Rd

Loud Party

60 block Loma Vista Dr
20 block Lavina Ct
100 block Glorietta Bl

Loitering

20 block Van Ripper Ln

Petty Theft

400 block Moraga Wy
50 block Moraga Wy
20 block Brookwood Rd (2)
40 block Heather Ln
10 block Orchard Rd
10 block Vianne Ct
CVS
10 block Camino Sobrante
10 block Arbolado Ct

Public Nuisance

100 block Ardith Ct
60 block Davis Rd
20 block Southwood Dr
30 block Southwood Dr
Overhill Rd/Catherine Ct
100 block Scenic Dr

Promiscuous shooting

Orinda Intermediate School

Reckless Driving

Camino Pablo/Brookwood Rd
Miramonte High School
Ivy Dr/Coral Dr
Moraga Wy/Brookwood Rd

Suspicious:

Person 10
Circumstances 8
Vehicle 14

Threats

Orinda BART

Traffic Stops

81

Traffic Pursuit

Hwy 24/Pleasant Hill

Vehicle Theft

60 block Bates Bl

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.
Send a letter to the editor:
letters@lamorinda weekly.com



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City Leaders Consider Historic Landmark Designation for Orinda's Frank Lloyd Wright House

By Laurie Snyder



Named as "the greatest architect of all time" by the American Institute of Architects in 1991, Frank Lloyd Wright defined space as "the breath of art," and strategically placed windows to seamlessly transition from his built world into nature. Photos Ohlen Alexander

"Respect the masterpiece. It is true reverence to man. There is no quality so great, none so much needed now." – Frank Lloyd Wright

Gerald Shmavonian, the new owner of Orinda's Frank Lloyd Wright-Buehler House and Gardens, has cleared two milestones en route to securing an official city Historic Landmark Designation for the distinctive complex. On Oct. 1, Orinda's Historic Landmark Committee (HLC) determined that six of the structures on the 3-acre property at 6 Great Oak Circle should qualify for the designation: the main residence, guest house, play house, tea house, and workshop, as well as the formal Shin garden conceived by Henry Matsutani, who achieved prominence in the 1960s for restoring the Japanese Tea Garden at Golden Gate Park and designing the Moon Viewing Garden for the San Francisco Botanical Gardens.

On Nov. 12, the Orinda Planning Commission concurred with that ruling. According to city planning director Emmanuel Ursu, the commission "recommended to the City Council that the FLW house, gardens and appurtenant structures described in the staff report be designated a city historic landmark."

Heralded as "the work of a master" from the Modern Movement when added to the National

Register of Historic Places in 2006, the Wright-Buehler Gardens also became a California State Historic Resource that same year. The main residence and workshop were designed by Wright himself while the play and guest houses were designed and built later by Walter Olds, Wright's apprentice who supervised the original construction of the main house and workshop from 1948 to 1949, and then oversaw the home's restoration from 1995 to 1997 following a devastating fire which damaged the bedroom wing and its adjoining hallway. Olds, who had come to know the icon's heart and mind well while studying with him at Taliesin, Wright's incomparable Wisconsin estate and architectural laboratory, was later lauded by architectural critics for his exacting attention to Wright's vision and techniques.

One of only two Usonian homes created by Wright in the San Francisco Bay Area and of just 12 in California, the main residence in Orinda has a basement – a rare feature for Wright homes. According to Carol Roland, author of the application securing the home's placement on the National Register, Wright's Usonians "are the culmination of his continual experimentation with the form and content of residential architecture." Each "was a response to his search for a house that would function best for the unique American family," and each "was carefully designed to its site to take ad-

vantage of the topography, maximize privacy, and ground the house in its natural environment."

Further setting the Orinda masterwork apart – even from Wright's other Usonians – is the Wright-Buehler workshop. Maynard Buehler, an engineer-inventor renowned for his rifle scope mounts, "required a specialized workspace in which he could experiment with ideas and forge tools to meet his needs," explains Roland. The Wright-designed shop was "fitted with cabinets and drawers custom designed to Buehler's specifications." Placed at the L-Plan's east end with high concrete block walls, a clerestory the length of the building's western front, a fireplace and bathroom, it was a one-of-a-kind workspace offering Buehler a snug place where he could "spend hours without having to go back and forth to the house" to "think through many of the concepts that resulted in the several patents that he held."

The only structure on the property not approved for landmark designation was the greenhouse. This decision was made because the structure's design origins remain unclear despite the intensive research undertaken during the prior national and state historic designation review processes. ... continued on page A11



The moment visitors enter the gardens at the Frank Lloyd Wright-Buehler House, many feel as if they have passed through a wrinkle in space and time.



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