

Architect: **Thornton Ladd**
1924-2010

Thornton Ladd was born in Portland, Oregon on January 29, 1924. Thornton Ladd was a quiet, yet visionary, creative. A family interest in art and aesthetics, strongly influenced by his mother's passion for collecting Japanese arts and crafts, encouraged and fueled Ladd's creative interests.

Thornton's lifelong interest in understated, aesthetic order led him from the arts to architecture upon beginning school at the University of Southern California (B.Arch 1952) where he also studied landscape architecture. His student interest in total environmental design would become the hallmark of his entire career. Thornton apprenticed with a Los Angeles area general contractor and with Pereira and Luckman prior to establishing Thornton Ladd & Associates (1954-1958). By 1958, Ladd entered into a partnership with architect, and USC classmate, John Field Kelsey. For many years Ladd & Kelsey was based in Pasadena. Ladd's own local legacy as a visionary modernist is built on numerous striking designs with his partner Kelsey, including what is now called the Norton Simon Museum and the Methodist church that appeared in the climax of the film 'The Graduate.' The firm has a vast collection of buildings and residences in Los Angeles County and only one known in the City of Santa Barbara, and one in Montecito (the Bear house designed by Ladd in 1957).

The Santa Barbara work is at 1920 Garden Street that Thornton Ladd designed for Prynce Hopkins. In an entire issue of "Noticias" magazine, printed by the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, dedicated to Prynce Hopkins and his contributions



John Kelsey and Thornton Ladd. Photo by Larry Frost courtesy of Occidental College

Above: Photo courtesy Ladd and Kelsey.org

Below: 1920 Garden Street in Santa Barbara.
Photo by Nicole Hernandez, 2022.



to Santa Barbara, it is noted that Hopkins argued with architect Ladd over the construction costs of the house and the architect was equally frustrated by Hopkins for taking extended trips and not being available for consultation. Hopkins typed a sixteen page letter to the architect detailing room-by-room possible changes he would like made. Once completed, Frank Lloyd Wright toured the house with Hopkins.

Below is a list of buildings designed by *Ladd* and *Ladd and Kelsey* together:

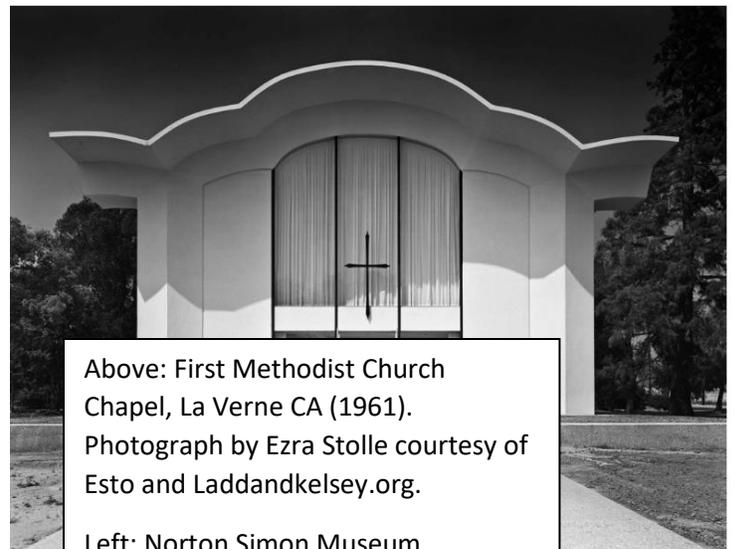
- Lyon, W. Parker Residence (1948)
- Ladd, Thornton Studio & Residence (1951)
Pasadena
- Bear, Donald House (1955)
Montecito, 1955
- Prynse Hopkins Residence, Santa Barbara, 1956.
- Ladd House, Pasadena, 1959
- Stuff Shirt Restaurant, Newport Beach, 1961
- Kelsey House, Pasadena, 1962
- Pasadena Art Museum, (Norton Simon Museum) 1969
- First Methodist Church, La Verne, 1961
- Annandale Country Club (1978)
Pasadena
- Bridge House (1979)
819 Las Palmas Road, Pasadena



Stuff Shirt Restaurant. Newport Beach (1961). Photograph by Ezra Stolle courtesy of Esto and Laddandkelsey.org.



Pasadena Art Museum, photo by Wayne Thom courtesy of USC Libraries



Above: First Methodist Church Chapel, La Verne CA (1961). Photograph by Ezra Stolle courtesy of Esto and Laddandkelsey.org.

Left: Norton Simon Museum Pasadena courtesy of Laddandkelsey.org.

Works Cited:

2022 Modern San Diego. "Thornton Ladd." <https://modernsandiego.com/people/thornton-ladd>.
Web November 8, 2022.

LaddandKelsey.org. "Thornton Ladd & John Kelsey". <https://laddandkelsey.org/ladd-kelsey-architects/>