

# Palisadian-Post

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## Palisadian Loring Builds 'Twins' on Akron

When it comes to his buildings, Richard Loring thinks of a different kind of box.

Pacific Palisades resident Loring has been building since he arrived in Los Angeles equipped with architecture degrees from the University of Michigan to start Archetype, his construction management business. Since then he has been responsible for dozens of custom-built, architect-designed residences.

In 2001 Loring, looking for a way to combine his passion for contemporary architecture with his experience in construction and an interest in improving the quality of multifamily housing, created a real estate development company called Habitat.

As a developer, Loring has made it his business to identify and promote talented younger architects who can carry out their shared architectural vision. The success of this vision is borne out by numerous local, state and national awards from local organizations like the Westside Urban Forum to the national American Institute of Architects. Habitat's projects have appeared widely in publications such as the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times and Dwell magazine.

After seven years focused on multi-family development, Loring looked to his home turf when considering a single-family development project. He found two adjacent, single-family properties on Akron Street, between Bienvenida Avenue and Lachman Lane.

Carrying on a tradition in the Palisades of distinguished architecture from masters such as Richard Neutra, Charles Moore, Ray Kappe and A. Quincy Jones, Loring turned to Santa Monica architects Hadrian Predock and John Frane, who bill their eight-year-old practice as a collaborative research and development architecture studio. The professional journal Architectural Record named Predock Frane one of 10 emerging international archi-

tectural firms in 2002. They are the recipients of many awards.

Economics dictated that the basic configuration of the two proposed houses be similar, so they share floor plans and basic exterior design, but the similarities end there. Differences in geography and topography of the two sites, as well as the planned architectural finishes and landscaping for the homes, have resulted in two distinctive properties.

The lots slope downward from the street toward a shaded glen, giving to the rear of both houses a character entirely different from their appearance at the street. The basic design concept of each house is a hybrid of two widely known Los Angeles types: the hillside home and the courtyard house. The contours of the site make the first a natural choice. The architects' imperative for ample space, light and air dictate the second.

The distinctive nature of each house is owed to its elevation. Occupying a lot somewhat higher in elevation than its neighbor to the east, the corner house has greater exposure at its perimeter. The adjacent house, although lower, possesses more of a tree-house feeling because of its relationship with the surrounding mature trees.

Both homes make much of their connection with the outdoors. As might be expected, they employ an extensive array of windows and oversized operable glass panels to connect occupants to the outside at the perimeter. The central court penetrates the home at all levels, which has the effect of surrounding important rooms with daylight, diminishing the need for artificial lighting in daytime, as well as enhancing natural ventilation.

The building team has taken other environmental measures beyond building regulations such as California Title 24, which sets minimum standards of building performance. All windows are double-glazed (two layers of glass with a vacuum layer between) to pro-



**Santa Monica architect Hadrian Predock (left) and general contractor Richard Loring, a Palisades resident, on the roof of the home they have built at 16550 Akron Street.**

vide a thermal barrier against inhospitable outside temperatures, and glass which faces the highest, hottest southern sun are deeply recessed within double walls, three feet thick to provide shade from the summer sun. A layered "rainscreen" exterior wall system improves both thermal performance and moisture protection. Rainwater runoff passes through a state-of-the-art, three-layer filtration system before finding its way via gravity into the municipal water system.

Inside, the architects have forsaken increasingly popular bamboo floors in favor of hickory, which they say is more durable and therefore a wise environmental choice.

Interior architectural features include what the architects call folded ceiling planes which echo the shape of the roof (whose ridges the architects designed to converge at a single point) and a circular oculus (a horizontal glass porthole placed between the lower level and the living room on the main level).

Rooms are laid out to accommodate 21st-century lifestyles, including a large, physically separate and private master suite and a large entertaining area connected to the outdoors. The shape of the building conforms to roof slopes required for drainage and to the architects' sense of design and scale in relationship to the street. In all, there

are four bedroom/bath suites plus a sitting room adjacent to the master bedroom and a family room with an exterior deck, as well as a high-end Boffi kitchen.

Ranging from 4,200 to 4,320 square feet, each home is contained within a deceptively simple package, an almost rectangular—although far from plain—box from which volumes have been sculpturally subtracted with attention to a careful balance of function and aesthetics, and of course to Richard Loring's vision of a different, better box.

The homes are being marketed by co-listing brokers Anthony Marguleas and Erik Lerner. Marguleas, a 15-year resident of

Pacific Palisades, is owner of Amalfi Estates. Contact: (310) 573-4245, ext. 100). Lerner, who is also a licensed architect, is with Crosby Doe Associates. Contact: (800) 775-5582.

"The home at 16550 Akron is 4,320 square feet and will be asking \$3,750,000 and the one at 16544 Akron is around 4,200 square feet and asking \$3,600,000," Marguleas said. The former home was featured on an American Institute of Architects/LA tour in late September.

Predock\_Frane Architects is located at 1819 Euclid St. in Santa Monica. Contact: (310) 399 2377. Richard Loring's Habitat Group LA is located at 10635 Santa Monica Blvd.