

The History of the Muirlands

In the 1920s, developer Harold James Muir purchased two hundred and fifty seven acres of Soledad Mountain looking seaward and he started making plans to create a prestigious subdivision. Building began in 1926 and Muir hired architect, Edgar V. Ullrich to design his own home as well as lay out the exclusive subdivision. Muirlands Drive was established to provide the first automobile access to the steep hillside subdivision and it is where many of the Muirlands first homes were built.

In the 1920s, the land was brown and barren or covered with low-lying chaparral, which is a far cry from the forest-like landscape of towering pines and eucalyptus trees that we see in the neighborhood today.



The Harold & Charlotte Muir House - Historic Site #827.

Designed by architect Edgar Ullrich for Harold James Muir, the developer of the Muirlands, the property still boasts a 3 acre site and many old-growth specimen trees and plantings. When it was built in 1928, it was known as the Versailles of La Jolla.



*The George & Ruth Glendown/Edgar Ullrich House - Historic Site #693.
Designed by Edgar Ullrich in 1928*



*The Carlos Taveres/Herbert Mann House - Historic Site #596
Designed by architect, Herbert Mann in 1931*

The Muirlands subdivision development office was built at the intersection of Muirlands Drive and Nautilus Street. The building was turned into a residence many years ago. Designed in the English Tudor Eclectic style by Ullrich it is still used as a residence.



*The John K. & Judith B. Wells Spec House #1 - Historic Site #1007.
Located across from the original development office, this 1928 French Eclectic style home looks as though it was designed by Edgar Ullrich, but no supporting documentation can be found connecting Ullrich to the house. However, his influence is evident.*

As with other subdivisions that began in the later part of the 1920s, development in the Muirlands was seriously curtailed with the Great Depression. Much of the lower portion of the Muirlands was developed later in the 1950s and most of the homes were designed in the California Ranch style.

Bearing no relation to the naturalist, John Muir for whom Muir Woods in Northern California is named, Harold James Muir was however, something of a Southern California naturalist. He believed landscape shared importance with architecture, something his architect, Edgar Ullrich believed too. Muir kept the size of his lots large, assuring that each home would be surrounded by beautiful gardens. Old-growth landscape and gardens still flourish in the old Muirlands today just as Muir envisioned.