

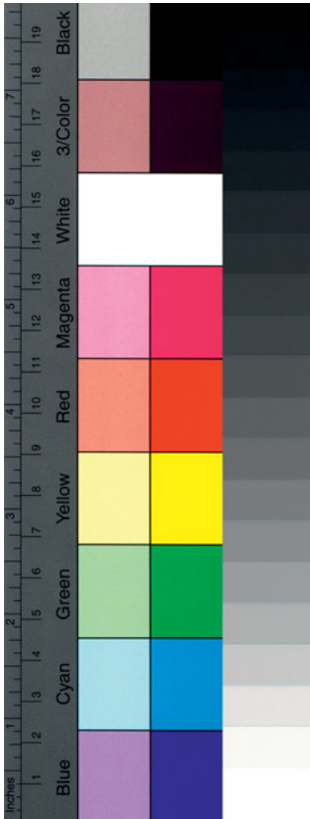
Karina Nimmerfall

Index of Livability, 2011

Die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den emanzipativen und zuweilen utopischen Aspekten modernistischer Architektur steht im Mittelpunkt der künstlerischen Arbeit von Karina Nimmerfall. In ihrer Fotoserie »Index of Livability«, 2011, untersucht sie die Geschichte eines historischen sozialen Wohnbauprogrammes für Los Angeles, das in den frühen 1950er Jahren von den Architekten Richard Neutra und Robert Alexander für Chavez Ravine entwickelt wurde, einem Stadtteil L.A.'s nördlich von Downtown. Das Projekt war von Anfang an umstritten, wurde von den Rechten der McCarthy-Ära stets als »kommunistisch« denunziert. So dokumentiert Karina Nimmerfall in »Index of Livability« dann auch das Scheitern dieses sozialen Wohnungsbaus und die Auswirkung dieses Scheiterns auf die Situation jetzt. Dazu hat die Künstlerin ein »fiktives Archiv [...] der geplanten Wohnbauprojekte in ihrer heutigen Erscheinungsform« (Nimmerfall) angelegt. Auf den Blättern dieses Archivs ist links ein dokumentierendes Foto zu sehen, rechts daneben findet sich ein Datenblatt mit weiterführenden Informationen zu verschiedenen historischen Dekaden, die das Projekt durchlaufen hat, sowie zu den jeweiligen städtebaulichen Erscheinungsformen.

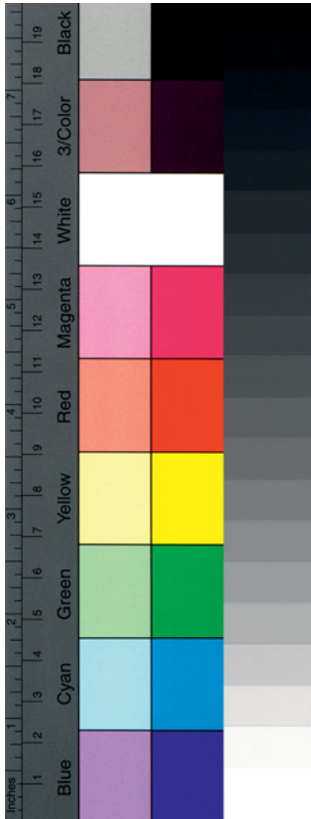
Raimar Stange

FILE UNDER: Urban Redevelopment | Planned Communities | Garden Cities | Low-Cost Housing | Los Angeles | Richard Neutra **RELATED PROJECTS:** Aliso Village | Ramona Gardens | Rancho San Pedro | William Mead Homes | Maravilla | Estrada Courts | Pico Gardens | Rose Hill Courts | Avalon Gardens | Pueblo del Rio **RELATED TOPICS:** Late New Deal Public Housing | Roosevelt Coalition | Defense Housing Programs | Lanham Act 1940 | Left Liberal Popular Front | Catherine Bauer | U.S. Housing Act of 1937 | Community Modernism | California Eagle | Zoot-Suit Riots | Crips and Bloods | Hacienda Village Bloods | South Side Watts Village Boys 13 | Watts Gang Task Force



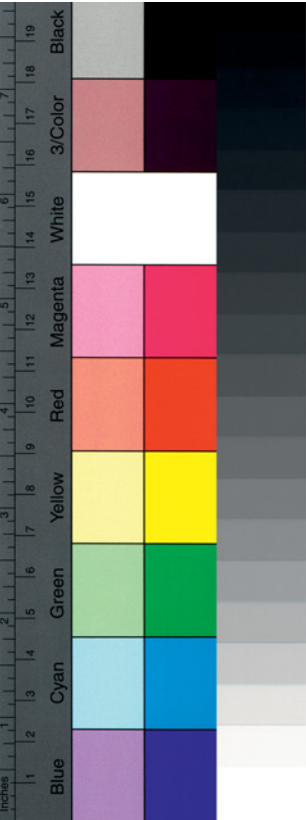
PROJECT: Hacienda Village **DATE COMPLETED:** 1942 **REVISITED:** June 5, 2011 **TYPE:** Public housing project for defense workers **ARCHITECT:** Paul Revere Williams, Richard Neutra, Adrian Wilson, Walter Wurdeman and Welton Becket **LOCATION:** East 104th Street and Compton Avenue, Los Angeles, California **SITE:** 17.63 acres of flat terrain located in the Watts district of south central Los Angeles, just east of the 110 freeway and south of the Florence – Graham residential district. **FUNDING:** Public (following the Housing Act of 1937); managed by the Los Angeles Housing Authority **DESCRIPTION:** The single-storey residential buildings with 184 units for over 400 residents were built with wood frames, white stucco exteriors and composition roofing. All units were designed to open onto gardens and were connected by walkways with no automobile traffic. The simple modern buildings mediate a Californian ranch style house design. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Recreational green area **REMARKS:** The housing project is home to the African-American gang East Side Hacienda Village Bloods, founded there in the 1970's, along with the Southside Watts Village Boys 13. In 2000 the Los Angeles Housing Authority renamed the housing project Gonzaque Village, in order to honor neighborhood advocate Ozie B. Gonzaque, a long-time resident of south central Los Angeles.

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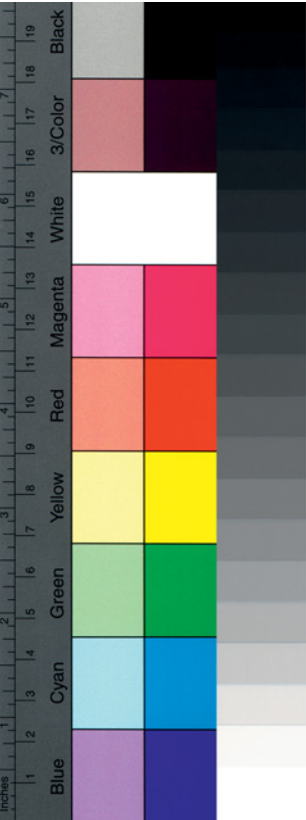
PROJECT: Channel Heights **DATE COMPLETED:** 1942 **REVISITED:** May 14, 2011 **TYPE:** Public war housing for shipyard and defense workers **ARCHITECT:** Richard Neutra **LOCATION:** Western Avenue and 25th Street, San Pedro, California **SITE:** 150 acres of rolling terrain, cut and divided by canyons, at the south slope of Palos Verdes Hills **FUNDING:** Public (Federal Works Agency); managed by the Los Angeles Housing Authority **DESCRIPTION:** 600 units consisting of one-storey duplexes alternating with two-storey buildings. Constructed of redwood and plaster and organized in three large clusters, all 222 residential structures were oriented towards the streets in an oblique 45° angle, to provide seclusion as well as unobstructed views of the San Pedro harbour and the ocean. Cul-de-sac planning was used to serve privacy, as well as communication, and pedestrian underpasses below high road embankments for safety. The interiors of the sample apartments were painted in blue-greens, rust red and cadmium yellow. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Community building, recreational green area, child care facilities, indoor and outdoor playgrounds, two schools, health care center and convenience store. A vegetable garden was operated as a cooperative experiment. **REMARKS:** Channel Heights tenants formed a residents council and organized activities, which turned the project into a socially progressive community, known until the early 1950s for its inter-ethnic and cooperative approach.

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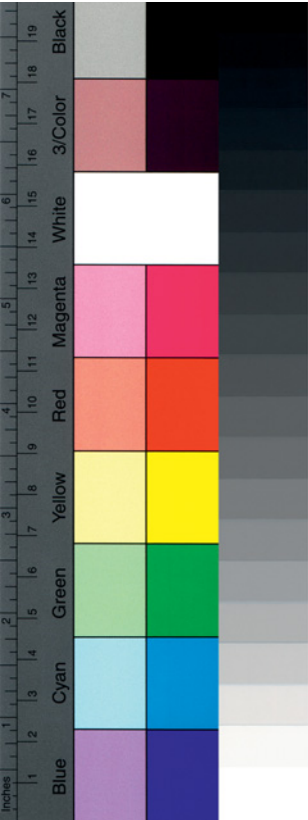
PROJECT: Neighborhood North San Pedro **DATE COMPLETED:** 1978 **REVISITED:** May 14, 2011 **TYPE:** Private single-family homes **ARCHITECT:** Unknown **LOCATION:** Via Cordova, Via Navarra, Via La Paz, Via Sebastian and Via Francisca, San Pedro, California **SITE:** West of North Park Western Drive and south of West Capitol Drive, at the south slope of Palos Verdes Hills **FUNDING:** Private **DESCRIPTION:** Residential neighborhood of about 117 private single-family homes. Situated along slightly sloped, looping streets and cul-de-sacs, these 3-6 bedroom houses, some with private outdoor pools, were built in various eclectic architectural styles, with whole streets based on the same building pattern. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** None **REMARKS:** In 1955 Channel Heights was turned into private low-income rental units. Fences were built by tenants to separate private gardens from open communal green space. After more than two decades of neglect, the dilapidated housing complex was destroyed by the end of the 1970s, with its residents forcefully relocated and scattered throughout the harbour area. Situated between the upscale neighborhoods of Miraleste, Palos Verdes and Rolling Hills, the razed land was used to make room for private residential buildings.

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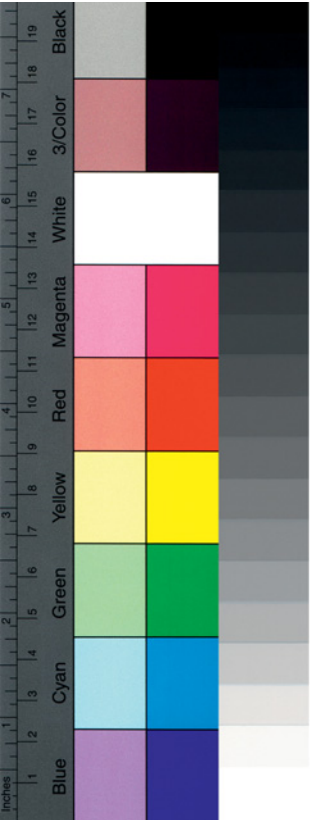
PROJECT: Maravilla **DATE COMPLETED:** 1940 **REVISITED:** May 24, 2011 **TYPE:** Public housing project **ARCHITECT:** Richard Neutra, et al. **LOCATION:** Brooklyn Avenue and Mednik Avenue, East Los Angeles, California **SITE:** Flatlands in the Belvedere district of East Los Angeles; east of Boyle Heights, along the western edge of the San Gabriel Valley **FUNDING:** Public; owned and managed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development **DESCRIPTION:** The Maravilla Housing Project covered about sixty acres of land and was occupied by 480 families. The simple sloped roof single-storey units opened onto green areas, while the service side of the buildings were oriented towards radial approach roads. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Communal green areas, handball court (built in 1923) **REMARKS:** In 1971 pressure from the East Los Angeles Community Union made the Housing Authority and the Housing and Urban Development consider a redevelopment of the dilapidated units. The buildings of the old housing project were demolished in 1973 and new multi-family units were built in their place. Major planning responsibilities were given to a council of Maravilla area residents. A manpower training grant was obtained during construction, so that they could train local residents to work on the building crews.

FILE UNDER: Urban Redevelopment | Planned Communities | Garden Cities | Low-Cost Housing | Los Angeles | Richard Neutra **RELATED PROJECTS:** Iiso Village | Ramona Gardens | Rancho San Pedro | William Mead Homes | Hacienda Village | Estrada Courts | Pico Gardens | Rose Hill Courts | Avalon Gardens | Pueblo del Rio **RELATED TOPICS:** East L.A. Walkouts | The Chicano Moratorium | Rubén Salazar Killing | 16th September Parade 1970 | Virgen De Guadalupe Murals | Maravilla Foundation | East Los Angeles Community Union | East Los Angeles Self-Government | Nueva Maravilla Redevelopment | La Rock | East L.A. Street Gangs | Historic Maravilla Handball Court Preservation | Maravilla Historical Society



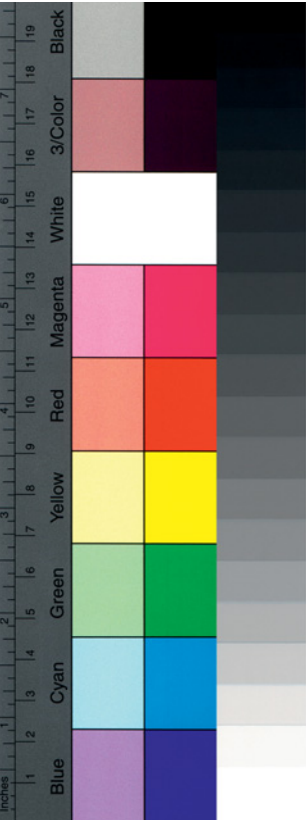
PROJECT: Nueva Maravilla **DATE COMPLETED:** 1974 **REVISITED:** May 24, 2011 **TYPE:** Public housing project **ARCHITECT:** Leon Glucksman, AIA **LOCATION:** 4900 East César E Chavèz Avenue, East Los Angeles, California **SITE:** Located in unincorporated East Los Angeles County **FUNDING:** Public; operated by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles **DESCRIPTION:** The complex is comprised of 504 two-storey buildings spread out amongst landscaped areas, giving the development the appearance of a middle-class condominium complex. Adobe-yellow plaster walls and the plain reddish roofs reflected the Mexican-American background of its occupants. With 350 family units, plus 147 elderly units, it is one of the largest public housing developments in the Los Angeles area. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Community center, senior citizen center, playgrounds, basketball court, communal flower gardens, handball court (built in 1923) **REMARKS:** In the late 1980s crime in the Maravilla Housing projects skyrocketed, due to gang activity and other factors. Increased law enforcement was provided, as well as physical security improvements including fencing and security systems, to limit access to some housing complexes. Vigas, as well as painted murals, highlighted the Hispanic presence. Two murals from the old Maravilla projects still exist today; they are now found on the exterior of the Community Development Commission's Housing Authority building.

FILE UNDER: Urban Redevelopment | Planned Communities | Garden Cities | Low-Cost Housing | Los Angeles | Richard Neutra **RELATED PROJECTS:** Nickerson Gardens | Imperial Courts | Mar Vista Gardens | San Fernando Gardens | Jordan Downs | Rush City Reformed **RELATED TOPICS:** Community Redevelopment Act of 1945 | Slum Clearance Programs | Leonard Nadel Slum Photographs | Housing Act of 1949 | The Battle of Chavez Ravine | Los Angeles Times | Fritz Burns | Committee against Socialist Housing | McCarthyism and the Red Scare | Proposition B 1952 | Frank Wilkinson | House Un-American Activities Committee | First Amendment | Decline of the Left | Corporate Modernism | The Citizens Committee to Save Chavez Ravine for the People | Taxpayers Committee for "Yes on Baseball" 1958 | Brooklyn Dodgers



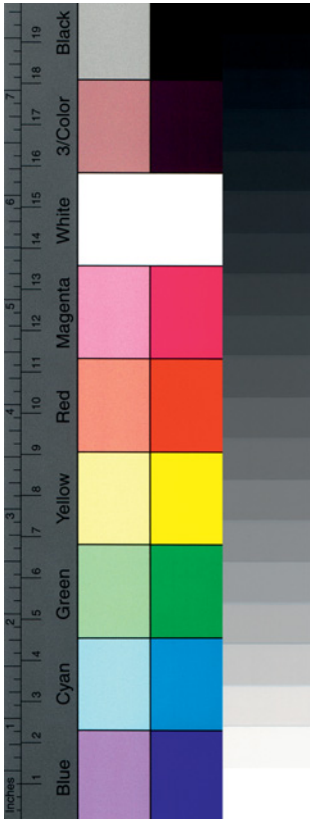
PROJECT: Elysian Park Heights **DATE COMPLETED:** 1951 – 1953 (unrealized) **REVISITED:** May 22, 2011 **TYPE:** Public housing project **ARCHITECT:** Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander **LOCATION:** Chavez Ravine, Los Angeles, California **SITE:** 278 acres of rolling terrain, cut and divided by canyons just northwest of the downtown district and adjacent to the wild Elysian Park **FUNDING:** Public (following the Housing Act of 1949) **DESCRIPTION:** The design projected a city within a city, for a population of 17,000. It was comprised of 24 thirteen-storey high rises and 163 low-rise residential buildings (two and three-storey townhouses with open recreation areas on each floor, as well as low-rise garden apartments with private gardens). All designs offered a variety of panoramic vistas from the mountains to the ocean. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Community Center, indoor and outdoor theaters, playgrounds, nurseries, four schools, three churches **REMARKS:** Due to the massive change of the political climate and the election of Norris Poulson as mayor in 1953, the housing project was cancelled and the cleared land acquired by the city for a drastically reduced price, with the condition that it had to be used for public purposes only. In 1958, when Los Angeles voters approved a "Taxpayers Committee for 'Yes on Baseball'" referendum, the condemned site of Chavez Ravine became Dodger Stadium, a private prestige sports facility and new home for the professional major league baseball team from Brooklyn.

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PROJECT: Dodger Stadium **DATE COMPLETED:** 1962 **REVISITED:** May 22, 2011 **TYPE:** Baseball stadium **ARCHITECT:** Emil Praeger **LOCATION:** Chavez Ravine, Los Angeles, California **SITE:** Northwest of the downtown business district, adjacent to Elysian Park **FUNDING:** Private **DESCRIPTION:** Mid-Century Modern-style baseball park (one of the last baseball-only facilities) with 56,000 seats and parking for 16,000 automobiles on 21 terraced lots adjacent to the same elevations as the six different seating levels. The original color scheme included light clay pastels of yellow, light orange, turquoise and sky blue. Its original design offered some innovative features, for instance the covered and screened section of dugout-level seats, which were inspired by Tokyo's Kōrakuen Stadium. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Elysian Park, with its recreational facilities (playgrounds and picnic areas) **REMARKS:** Now being one of the oldest (and in some ways economically outdated) stadiums in the country, along with its socially problematic issues (gang activity and violent audience conflicts), possibilities for a new downtown stadium have been considered. Recent real estate activities and the inherent real estate value of the site for large-scale developers suggest another transformation in the near future, recalling Chavez Ravine's previous history.

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PROJECT: Pueblo del Rio **DATE COMPLETED:** 1942 **REVISITED:** June 5, 2011 **TYPE:** Public housing project for defense workers **ARCHITECT:** Paul Revere Williams, Richard Neutra, Adrian Wilson, Walter Wurdeman and Welton Becket **LOCATION:** 53rd Street and Holmes Avenue, Los Angeles, California **SITE:** 17.5 acres of land located in flat terrain on the western edge of the industrial city of Vernon, south of the Florence – Graham residential district. **FUNDING:** Public (following the Housing Act of 1937); managed by the Los Angeles Housing Authority **DESCRIPTION:** 57 two-storey long brick apartment blocks with 400 units placed around green areas and recreational spaces. All apartments face gardens on both sides. The community building's sliding doors allowed for generous access out onto adjacent private patios. **SOCIAL FACILITIES:** Social hall, nursery, recreational green area, playgrounds **REMARKS:** Over time the residents of the housing project faced the removal of communal spaces, green areas and the buildings' overhangs, in order to fight crime. In the 1970s even the playgrounds were eventually paved over. Based on the recent awareness of conservation issues voiced by critics and opposed to the trend of the 1990s (which preferred the destruction of existing housing projects), the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles decided for the renovation of the buildings in 2003.