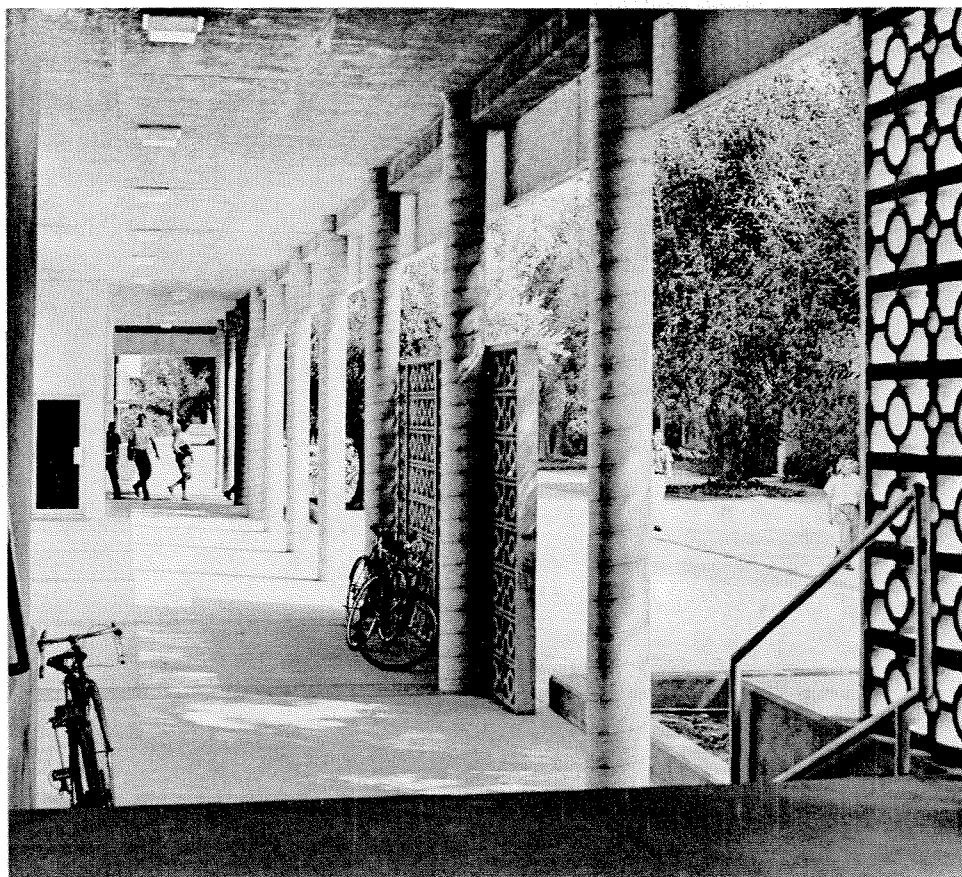


THE NEW STUDENT HOUSES



Caltech's three new Student Houses opened this month (page 34), early results of the current Development Program and a long-belated culmination of campus planning done some 40 years ago. They've been a long time a'coming.

As far back as 1922, the present House system was envisaged in a report by Robert A. Millikan. He advocated small Houses with alleys and Resident Associates, modeled after the Oxford system. The Board of Trustees agreed with him, and also added that the advantages of small living groups justified their additional cost.

Practically everybody from the Trustees on down was interested in filling the costs, and would-be Tom Paines filled Institute pamphlet after Institute pamphlet with reminders that only 60 students were living on campus (in the recently abandoned Old Dorm), and that a lot more should be. This big search for House donors ran on through the 20's.

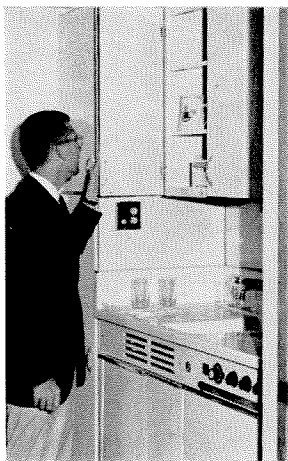
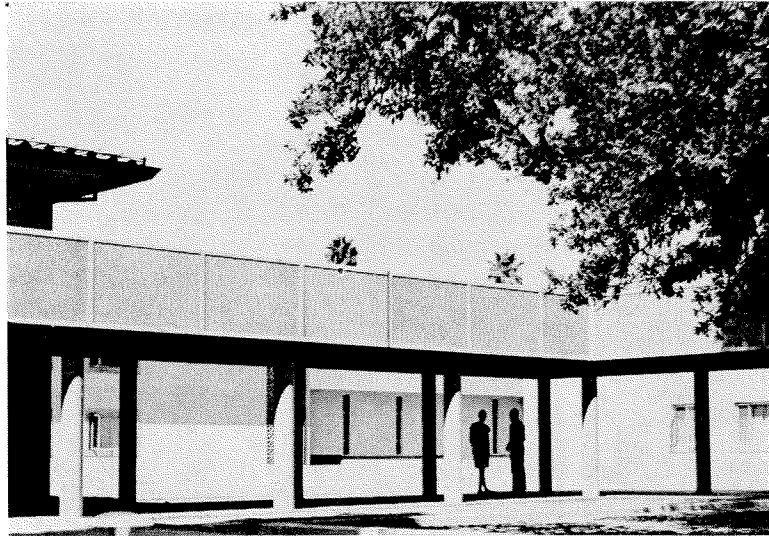
It finally reached pay dirt in mid-1928, when Mr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Dabney announced they would put up \$200,000 to pay for one House. Dr. and Mrs. L. D. Ricketts, Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Blacker, and 20 donors who financed Arthur H. Fleming House soon followed suit, and the (now) old Houses were dedicated in September 1931. Four other Houses, planned for across the Olive Walk, were left to a benevolent future.

While the benevolent future obligingly provided a depression, a war, an inflation, and another war in quick succession, the new Houses remained tantalizing dreams. Every so often, somebody like the Master of Student Houses or a Dean suggested that the old Houses were really getting awfully crowded, and that an architect ought to be brought in, but nothing ever seemed to come of it. The cost of living was too high, let alone the cost of giving.

It looked as though the cost of giving were going to be too high for the next 100 years, until the Development Program came along in the spring of 1958, and provided a sure-fire method of getting three new Houses as well as a parcel of other buildings. All the Development people had to do was go out and get three money-heavy donors to give \$800,000 apiece (as much, incidentally, as all the old Houses put together had cost). Or so everybody thought.

Everybody thought incorrectly. One House did come from a single donor, but the other two were pieced together from parents' donations, friends' donations, alumni donations, Pasadena citizens' donations, trustees' donations, practically any scraps of money that the Development people could lay their hands on. The one-donation House was named in honor of Ralph B. and Lulu Lloyd since it was paid for by the Lloyd Foundation. The other two were named

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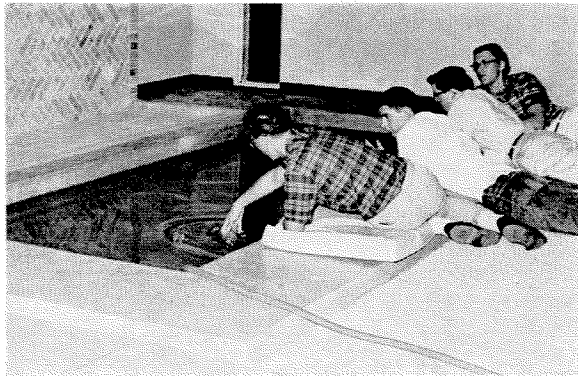
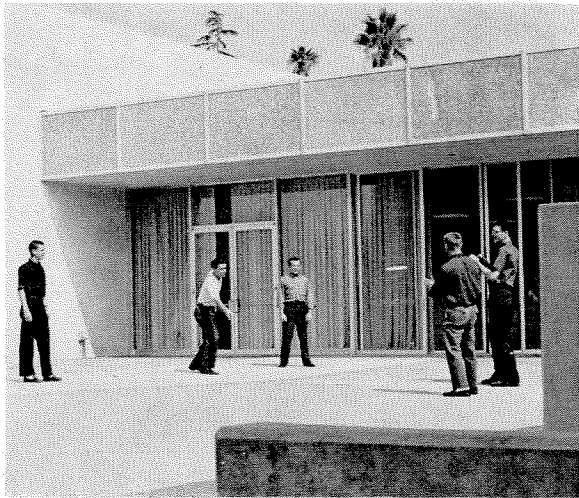
Life in the new Houses will undoubtedly carry on most of the old traditions from across the Olive Walk.

for James R. Page and Albert B. Ruddock, former and current chairmen respectively, of the Board of Trustees.

The new Houses were designed by Smith, Powell and Morgridge, who tried to retain the style of the old Houses and pay 1960 prices at the same time. Considering the difficulties involved, Messrs Smith, Powell and Morgridge didn't do too badly. Because of esthetic and building complications known only to architects, the new Houses don't wrap around their courtyards the way the old ones do, and the alley divisions are indicated by bends in the corridors and by swinging doors rather than by foot-thick reinforced concrete walls. They also don't have the charming air of the old Houses, which comes from incidentals like sculptured concrete gargoyles on the pillars and ennobling Latin mottos carved imperishably over the doors.

On the other hand, the new House rooms are bigger, the lighting is decent, and the Swedish modern furniture, for all its bleakness, looks nice in the lounges.

The lounges, in fact, are the most interesting parts of the new Houses — especially the fireplaces. Page has a foot-and-a-half-deep "conversation pit" in front of its fireplace (which was immediately converted into a goldfish pond). Lloyd's hearth looks like the sacrificial altar in a multi-megabuck Hollywood epic.



Everyone is taking great pains to insure that the new Houses don't degenerate into "just nothin' but dorms."

and Ruddock's mantel has brightly polished stonework which looks as if it's going to fall off any minute in a thundering, spectator-smashing avalanche. Actually, this is unlikely, as every new viewer realizes after about fifteen minutes. The new Houses are built of reinforced concrete, and even the fireplaces could probably stand up under anything short of a direct hit or a magnitude seven earthquake on the San Andreas.

Life in the new Houses will undoubtedly carry on most of the old and hallowed traditions from across the Olive Walk. People — students, faculty, everybody — are taking great pains to insure that Page, Lloyd and Ruddock don't degenerate into "just nothin' but dorms."

Most of the members are working hard for their new Houses by becoming busy with the usual concerns — meeting frosh, hectoring frosh, holding parties, holding bull sessions, even studying. The only usual thing they aren't doing is griping about House dues. Everybody is shockingly willing to pay extra money — at least for first term.

Caltechmanship — the fine art of passing while

ingeniously wasting 23½ hours a day — is also taking its hold on the new Houses. The goldfish in Page's Pit were the first stunt, but they were soon followed by enforced elevator rides in the dumb-waiters, a few minor waterfights in the courtyards, and good old reliable frisbie-flipping. Pretty soon now, somebody will figure out how to send 70 watts of air-raid sirens into somebody else's medicine cabinet, and things will be completely normal.

The other prominent features of the old Houses — devices for the regulation, containment and suppression of Caltechmanship — are also getting established. New Resident Associates have been appointed and are doing their jobs with quiet competence; student Executive and Upper Class Committees are holding long meetings and sometimes solving House problems at the same time.

The Houses themselves — officers, members, and everybody connected with them — seem to be solving their problems as well. Just as soon as somebody figures out how to hang soap dishes in the showers (the architects forgot to) things should be great.

— by Lance Taylor '62