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Archives of American Art

"Happy Birthday RMS", circa 1950

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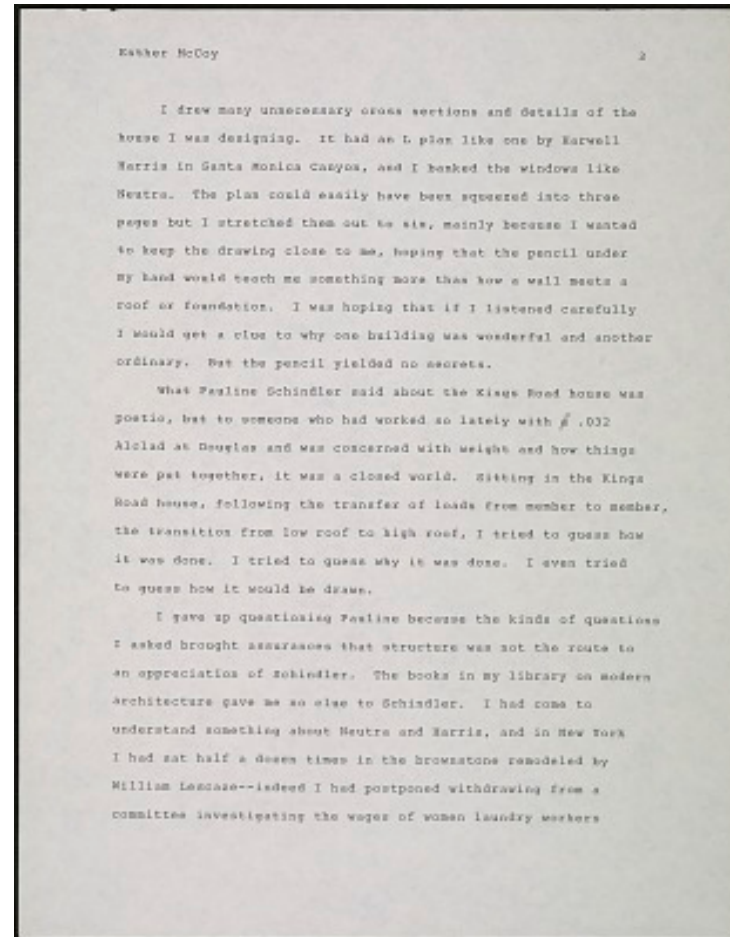
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I drew many unnecessary cross sections and details of the house I was designing. It had an L plan like one by Harwell Harris in Santa Monica Canyon, and I banked the windows like Neutra. The plan could easily have been squeezed into three pages but I stretched them out to six, mainly because I wanted to keep the drawing close to me, hoping that the pencil under my hand would teach me something more than how a wall meets a roof or foundation. I was hoping that if I listened carefully I would get a clue to why one building was wonderful and another ordinary. But the pencil yielded no secrets.

What Pauline Schindler said about the Kings Road house was poetic, but to someone who had worked so lately with ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ a ~~[[/strikethrough]]~~ .032 Alclad at Douglas and was concerned with weight and how things were put together, it was closed world. Sitting in the Kings Road house, following the transfer of loads from member to member, the transition from low roof to high roof, I tried to guess how it was done. I tried to guess why it was done. I even tried to guess how it would be drawn.

I gave up questioning Pauline because the kinds of questions I asked brought assurances that structure was not the route to an appreciation of Schindler. The books in my library on modern architecture gave me no clue to Schindler. I had come to understand something about Neutra and Harris, and in New York I had sat half a dozen times in the brownstone remodeled by William Lescaze--indeed I had postponed withdrawing from a committee investigating the wages of women laundry workers



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