

# GREEN HOMES

# El Toro Ojai, CA

## Design Team

**PROJECT ARCHITECT:**  
Becker Henson Niksto Architects

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:**  
Jim Melnik

**INTERIOR DESIGN:**  
Randy Franks

**CONTRACTOR:**  
Allen Construction

**STRUCTURAL + CIVIL ENGINEERS:**  
Ashley & Vance

**ELECTRICAL ENGINEER:**  
JMPE Electrical Engineering

**MECHANICAL ENGINEER:**  
Monterey Energy Group

**ADDITIONAL TEAM MEMBERS:**  
**Water System:**  
Bill Mellett Design  
**Permaculture Design:**  
Ojai Permaculture



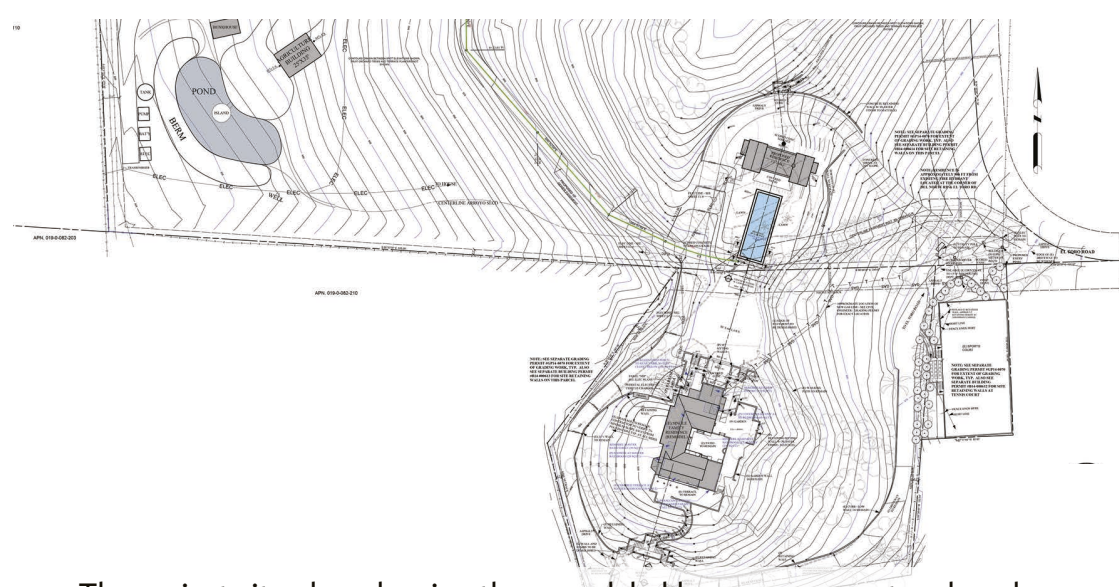
The renovated living room showcases the restored, original painted burlap ceilings; refurbished, original hardwood floors; repaired, original wrought iron light fixtures; and original, ceramic tile accents.



A tile doctor ensured damage to the original art deco tile throughout the home was kept to a minimum when installing updated plumbing fixtures. One would never think the master bathroom's new shower and water closet weren't original.



Site improvements included the construction of a parking lot for (16) parking spaces, site pedestrian access, a trash & transformer enclosure, a central



The project site plan, showing the remodeled home, new guest and pool, as well as the remainder of the 8 acre property which is being farmed using permaculture practices.



South facing exterior of the restored home. Notice the refurbished, original balconies, wrought iron railings, and architectural details.

## Project Description

How do you preserve the architectural history of a home while incorporating 21st century thinking around sustainability and ecological design? This was the challenge for the owners of this property. Decades of weather and water damage had caused this home, designed by famed architect Arthur E. Harvey, built in 1926, and registered as an historic landmark by the owners in 2016, to fall into disrepair. Every effort was made to not only repair this damage, but to eliminate the problems that created them.

The remodel project touched every inch of the home, which had never experienced a significant remodel. Installing energy and water efficient electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems was a high priority, as was improving the performance of the exterior shell. In addition, upgrades were required to meet current seismic code. All this was done while maintaining the home's original footprint and its architectural integrity.

Unique and timeless architectural features were restored including original handmade Encaustic ceramic tiles; long forgotten, painted ceilings on burlap canvas; classic, cast iron light fixtures; and, original door and window hardware. Other elements of the project included the construction of a new pool and guest house to replace demolished originals.

The owners' vision for the eight-acre grounds was to turn the land into a model for water conservation, natural resource management, and small organic farming methods. The goal here was to apply principles of permaculture along with 21st century design and technology to develop systems that produce more resources than the property uses.



Photo Credit: