

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

NEUTRA STUDIO AND RESIDENCES

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Neutra Studio and Residences

Other Name/Site Number: VDL Research House

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 2300 Silver Lake Blvd and 2351 Edgewater Terrace

Not for publication:

City/Town: Los Angeles

Vicinity:

State: CA

County: LA

Code: 90039

Zip Code:

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___
Public-Local: ___
Public-State: X
Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X
District: ___
Site: ___
Structure: ___
Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2
0
0
0
2

Noncontributing

0 buildings
0 sites
0 structures
0 objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 2

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ Entered in the National Register
- ___ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ Removed from the National Register
- ___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic, Commerce

Sub: Multiple dwelling, Professional

Current: Educational, Domestic

Sub: Educ./Single Dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Modern Movement, International Style, Mid-Century Modern

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Reinforced concrete

Walls: Wood and Stucco

Roof: Wood and Metal

Other: Metal/Steel, Glass/Reflective

DRAFT

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Summary Statement

The Neutra compound meets National Historic Landmark Criterion 2, for its association with the productive period of a person of national historic significance. The Neutra VDL Studio and Residences have a direct and important association with the productive life of Richard Joseph Neutra (1892-1970), a nationally significant twentieth-century architect. The VDL Studio and Residences is among the key properties for understanding Neutra's national significance and the breadth of his lasting contributions to architectural design in the US and abroad. It is the only property where one can see the progression of Neutra's style over a period of several years.

In 2009, the VDL Neutra Studio and Residences were listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at a national level of significance, and under Criterion Consideration G, as an exceptionally significant work in the context of Richard Neutra's practice. The property was the residence and studio of Richard J. Neutra, a seminal figure in the Modern movement of architecture. Like fellow Viennese native R.M. Schindler, Neutra introduced avant-garde European design principles to Los Angeles in the early twentieth century. Richard Neutra designed most of his 300 projects at the VDL Studio and Residence and he consciously used the compound to demonstrate the full range of his architectural approach to prospective clients and the public at large.

Neutra's development of the overall building form, his innovative use of materials, and experimentation, created an exemplary design solution to a challenge that deeply interested him—how to create a humane, multi-household environment on a small urban space with a small budget. This is a challenge not offered by some of the more opulent and famous Neutra projects. As such, the compound demonstrated, for wider application to all those challenged and inspired by the twin constraints of a small footprint and limited funds, while also demonstrating many of the characteristic elements of architectural design that would later define many of his other well-known works.

The VDL Studio and Residences, which also is known as the VDL Research House is the only singular location where one can see the seeds and evolution of Neutra's practice spanning nearly half a century. Here, one can see through three phases of design and construction what Richard Neutra alone in 1932 and 1940 and what Neutra with his partner and son Dion in 1966 had been exploring, developing and trying to demonstrate and publish.

Built with a personal loan from Dutch industrialist Cornelius van der Leeuw (VDL), the VDL Research House also is where Neutra lived with his family and it is where his ashes are buried. As such the property figures prominently in that rare but highly important set of buildings, as the studio and residence of a great architect or designer. Analogous works are Frank Lloyd Wright's Studio/Residence in Oak Park, Illinois and the two Taliesin facilities, Frederick Law Olmsted's studio residences in Brookline, Massachusetts and Charles and Ray Eames Studio and Residence, located in Pacific Palisades, California, all of which are designated National Historic Landmarks.

Overall Description

The three stages of construction and the complex overall design, layout and form of the property make it near impossible to avoid some redundancy in effectively describing the place. To best provide a clear understanding of how each phase fits into the whole today, and of the layout, aesthetics, program and function of each space, while also minimizing repetition, the following description is separated into three sections – a general description of the overall form and spatial layout, a description of how each phase is experienced today and finally a detailed description of each design and construction phase.

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The Neutra Studio and Residences are located in the Silver Lake District of Los Angeles, a largely residential suburban neighborhood, approximately four miles northwest of downtown. The centerpiece of the Silver Lake District is the Silver Lake Reservoir, established by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power in 1906. The topography surrounding the reservoir rises sharply, with narrow streets winding up steep hillsides. The VDL complex is located on the east side of Silver Lake Boulevard, which runs along the east side of the reservoir and functions as the major north-south vehicular access through the area.

The front elevation and main entrance to the Neutra Studio and Residences faces west toward the Silver Lake Reservoir. When the 1932 building was designed and constructed, the edge of the reservoir was only 100 feet west of the house. In the 1950s, the reservoir was partially filled, separating it from the house by another 500 feet. The east, or rear, of the property fronts Edgewater Terrace, a quiet, tree-lined, residential street.

The three construction phases that occurred in 1932, 1940 and 1966 are distinct, yet compose a unified whole. The original 1932 small two-story building, with basement and roof deck, was constructed on the west side of the lot, set back approximately twelve feet from Silver Lake Blvd. The 1940 Garden House was designed and constructed as a somewhat smaller single story building with a T-shaped layout. Together, the Garden House and the 1932 main wing formed an articulated H in plan that created two private outdoor spaces. These spaces or rooms, which are an integral part of the buildings were complemented by a roof-top deck that provided views to the landscape beyond. The 1966 construction, often referred to as VDL II was a collaborative effort by Richard Neutra with his son and partner, Dion. VDL II was designed for and built on top of the 1932 main wing basement level after fire seriously damaged the first and second stories of the main building, while sparing the basement level, Garden House and the patio spaces.

The outdoor patios are an integral part of the place and how it functions. They are essentially outdoor rooms or continuums of indoor space and were envisioned, created, and anticipated or embraced in all three phases of design and construction. The primary or south patio is more private and is enhanced by a mature Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*). Both patio spaces are experienced from varied floor elevations, rooms and other spaces within the property. The outdoor spaces also were intentionally designed to serve as circulation pathways between the separate buildings. For example, the only way to pass from the Garden House to the main house is through the south or north patios. This was deliberate and always the case. As such the Neutra Studio and Residences constitute a compound and not a single family residence. This was perhaps most apparent in the early 1930s and then again during the war years in the 1940s when the Neutra family encountered financial difficulties. During these difficult times, three households and a small office successfully functioned at the VDL Research House, due in part to the flexible layout, multiple levels, external circulation and the 12 doors that allow exiting the property without disturbing other occupants.

The harmonic balance between physical separation and spatial integration remain evident at the property today. This equilibrium is reinforced by the multi-level interplay between interior and exterior space, which remains a key character defining feature that is present in and reinforced by all three phases of construction. Also common to all three construction phases are large expanses of window walls, of which many are operable, an open plan, built-in furnishings, innovative use of materials and the ability to accommodate varied functions and separate households while preserving privacy and separation within a modest building envelope and small lot.

To walk through the Neutra Studio and Residences today is to experience the three distinct yet complimentary and spatially integrated phases of construction as well as an evolving continuum of Neutra's far reaching contributions to design in the United States and abroad. Before describing in greater detail each construction phase individually, it is useful to describe how the visitor experiences the three phases of composition today as a whole.

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Most visitors would approach the property from Silver Lake Boulevard and once at the property would enter via a small and low concrete foot “bridge” that dates from 1932. The jagged edge on the south side of the bridge was caused during demolition after the 1963 fire. After “crossing” the bridge, a visitor would arrive at the entry alcove of the 1966 main floor and would have the option of proceeding forward through a glass door or turning left and entering through a solid wood door. Through the side facing wood door, one would enter into the meeting room and former design studio on the main floor of the 1966 Richard and Dion design, and one would be standing on the original prefabricated, 1932 vibrated concrete joists and foundation slab. The joists actually are visible from what the family called the apprentices’ room, which is located on the original basement level that survived the fire. If entering through the front facing glass door, one would arrive in a foyer that served the more private functions of the house. To the right is a small bedroom suite; straight ahead, an open stair leads to the second level and immediately beyond the stair, there is a large window wall, through which the 1940 Garden House and the larger south patio are visible. The right hand leaf of the window wall is operable and opens onto a small outdoor porch that sits approximately three feet above the finished grade of the south patio, but is flush with the finished floor of the main wing. The south patio is accessible from the porch via steps located at the south end and a small nearly hidden wood door located in the wall at the north end of the porch provides access to steps that lead into the north patio.

From the north patio, one can enter the apprentices’ room through a customized garage door that is evidence of a 1930s change in function from garage to living space. At that time, a pedestrian door and strip window were fabricated into a garage door. In this way, the Neutra sons, when they lived there, or apprentices who stayed there, after the sons left, could enter and exit by the pedestrian, or on many warm California days and nights, had the option of opening the garage door entirely, linking the room to the fresh air and activities on the north patio. This use of a garage door mechanism, to create a flexible barrier between indoor and outdoor living spaces, was used again by Neutra in his 1940s Puerto Rican school prototype designs discussed later in the significance section of this nomination. Inside the apprentices’ room, the 1932 prefabricated joists remain exposed and form the ceiling. The walls are the original poured reinforced concrete foundation walls of the 1932 construction with original small windows and original 1930s cabinetry still in place. The cabinets were built during the conversion of the garage into the living space for Dion Neutra when he was a pre-teen.

Exiting the apprentices’ room and crossing the north patio, one passes a small brick Neutra-designed incinerator that was constructed in the 1930s but never used. It is a reminder of the time before air pollution regulations implemented in the early 1950s, when individual homeowners burning garbage in the Los Angeles Basin was common practice. Beyond the patio, a door in the north-facing wall of the carport leads into the former “play room” of the 1940 Garden House Wing. The playroom was subdivided to create two bedrooms in the early 1960s, to accommodate Dion Neutra’s family, as he began overseeing the construction of the VDL II design. Further in, the space is intersected by a wing (the leg of the T-shaped Garden House plan) that contains a bathroom and small guest bedroom. A few more steps upward and beyond the wing, lead the visitor to the Garden House living room where the original materials and layout are almost entirely intact. On the east side of the living room there is a bank of windows and a small entry alcove that leads to the 2351 Edgewater Terrace entrance of the Garden House portion of the Neutra compound. It, like the residential entry door to the main building, is comprised of a large clear glass panel and was intended by Neutra to convey a welcoming transparency.

On the west side of the Garden House living room, one can pass through the sliding glass walls into the south patio, under an ample overhang with the same historic version of innovative strip lighting first introduced in the 1932 VDL design. From there, one can look across and up to the main floor, the second floor and the penthouse of the 1966 Phase III construction. At this point one can walk across the patio space up the stairs to the porch,

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enter the main wing, and arrive at the original point of entry. Turning to the right and up the stairs leads to the primary interior Neutra family living space re built during the third construction phase. The kitchen, dining, living area make up most of the interior space at this level along with two bedrooms and a bath, which are described in greater detail in the VDL Phase III section of this document. The bedroom sitting porches flank the exterior stair that leads to the penthouse level

All three phases of VDL Research House design and construction are underpinned by a strong set of beliefs and convictions that Richard Neutra infused into his work. Neutra's writings, described later in this document, emphasized using insights from the social and biological sciences to facilitate and enhance what people do, how people interact and what people experience in a live-work space such as this. His writings and designs promoted the importance of bringing in the sights, sounds and smells of ever-changing nature into the built environment, for the purpose of enhancing well-being, even in a suburban setting. Neutra was committed to facilitate a comfortable interior climate through design. Through articles and books he also explained why he wanted to avoid the constraints of historical reference and deploy appropriate new materials and technologies to further these design goals without the conspicuous consumption of space, expensive materials or expensive craftsmanship.

Richard Neutra's 1932 and 1940 *answers* to these design challenges were retained and amplified as he and his son and partner Dion preceded with his much extolled commitment to team work in the rebuilding of the destroyed portions of the VDL Wing. Richard and Dion Neutra decided that the design issues addressed in 1932 for this small suburban lot and reinforced in the 1940 Garden House were still valid when they designed and built the top floors of the main wing in the 1960s. As described in more detail below, the original floor plans, the use of a rooftop garden, the fenestration to capture distant landscapes while screening out neighbors, strategies for controlling the sun and capturing breezes were all retained and improved upon. Some changes in function and thirty years of practical experience and scientific reading informed the modifications to the original design. Shallow reflection pools were added to each level of the building including the roof. Movable vertical sun louvers were added to the west side of the building. Other important improvements also were included and are described in detail below. Together, the 1932, 1940 and 1966 design and construction phases demonstrate Neutra's approach, his innovation and convictions in design during the most productive years of his life.

Design and Construction History: Understanding VDL Chronologically.**VDL Research House Phase I, 1932 Main Building (VDL I)**

The first phase of the VDL Research House was a two-story structure with a basement and roof deck. The building was designed to accommodate and reflect the multiple purposes of the building –the Neutra residence, a bachelor's apartment for possible renters, apprentice room and an architect's studio. The entry level floor included a reception space, a large room for an office/studio, a studio apartment, bedroom, small bathroom and its own entrance, separate from the entrance to the upper floors. There were three entrances: one that led directly into the studio, another that led to the rear apartment and still another to the living quarters above.

The studio housed all aspects of Richard's practice for three decades until a part of the practice was moved to a new building he designed on Glendale Boulevard. The first-floor living spaces housed the family's many guests, as well as some of Richard's draftsmen, including the architect Gregory Ain and his wife, who were the first occupants of the apartment. Other office associates were later housed in the converted garage (apprentices' rooms) on the basement level. The primary living space for the Neutra family was located upstairs on the second floor. North of the stairwell, the family's living room and dining room were combined into a large communal space that was adjacent to a small kitchen. Two bedrooms and a bathroom were located to the south of the stairwell. A sleeping porch was incorporated into the second floor plan to the south of the living/dining room.

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From the sleeping porch, a ladder extended to the rooftop deck, which provided panoramic views of Silver Lake. The basement included the garage/bedroom-study (apprentices' room), laundry room and utility room.

To emphasize the research function of the house, Neutra solicited experimental building materials from manufacturers in exchange for publicity. For example, aluminum foil was used to line the exterior walls as insulation, while the roof was finished with aluminum cap sheet and wood slat decking. On the interior, Masonite pressed wood paneling was used extensively for doors and built-in furnishings. The use of such experimental materials as well as the innovative use of more common materials turned the house into a demonstration piece for both function and economy.

Due to the compressed size of the house, Neutra employed several visual approaches and design details to open up the interiors and to create a sense of space. These techniques included the judicious incorporation of mirrored surfaces to reflect views and the expansive use of large windows to visually extend the spaces to the outdoors. Neutra's use of mirrored surfaces is subtle; yet the affect is easily felt. He also used built-in furniture extensively in the house. This opened up the floor space and created unique spatial efficiency.

The 1932 VDL Research House introduced for the first time Neutra's characteristic Wrightian deep overhangs into which he inserted for the first time in his practice outdoor strip lighting and large screened area, allowing the flat roof plenum to breathe. These same details were incorporated in his buildings from that time forward and also can be seen in their 1930s version in the Garden House Wing and in their later version in the 1966 Richard and Dion Neutra VDL II construction.

The VDL Research House was recognized early on for some of the construction techniques that were used. The concrete foundation was designed with pre-fabricated, vibrated, concrete floor joists, in combination with a suspended, poured-in-place reinforced slab. The use of these materials in this manner and the construction methods were considered innovative in the 1930s. This design solution, which still can be seen from below in the "apprentices' room," was featured in a 1936 M.I.T. publication about innovative houses:

The skeleton is bolted to a pre-fabricated, vibrated, reinforced-concrete joist-and-girder construction...The floor is constructed on a series of pre-cast reinforced concrete floor joists 4" wide and 6", 7", 8" and 10" deep. These are spaced at 2'-8" on centers. Owing to their peculiar profile, they cooperate with pre-cast bridging to support form boards for casting the floor slab without the use of any nails, so that the forms can be removed without destroying them. It is said that the joists for the entire ground floor were laid in one hour and forty minutes....the V.D.L. house is entirely too new and too frankly experimental to permit much criticism. On the structural side, the house appears to be a fine finished product.¹

The upper floors and roof deck of the house (modified c. 1950), by contrast, were constructed of traditional wood balloon framing with stucco sheathing. The stucco was incorporated into the façade in horizontal bands between rows of continuous, metal casement windows. The size of the prefabricated windows was used as the module for both the aesthetic design and structural frame of the house.

The original VDL Research House sustained serious damage from fire in 1963; however, many of the key characteristics of the house from this first phase of Richard Neutra's interpretation of Modernism had been further perpetuated in his design of the 1940 Garden House wing, which was spared by the fire and later in the 1966 new construction, known as VDLII. These character defining features are still evident today and

¹ Albert F. Bemis, *The Evolving House, Vol. III* (Cambridge MA: The Technology Press MIT, 1936), 568.

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include: the main building's overall footprint; the basement, foundation and concrete floor joists, all of which survived the 1963 fire; the use of innovative materials and finishes; the incorporation of mirrored surfaces, the interplay of interior and exterior space, large expanses of glass, built-in furniture, and the overall organization of spaces and functions within the house.

VDL Research House Phase II, 1940 Garden House

The garden house reflects the second phase of Neutra's interpretation of Modernism. Built in 1939-1940 on the eastern side of the lot with direct access from Edgewater Terrace, the garden house expanded upon many design elements employed in the 1932 main building and now typical of what architectural historians came to call the "International Style" of the 1930s. They are indicative of Neutra's design philosophy during this period and include characteristic features designed to blur the distinction between interior and exterior space, emphasis on horizontality, integration with the landscape and climate, and lack of ornamentation. The garden house diminishes the interior/exterior distinction through the use of large sliding glass doors that are sheltered by the deep overhang of a nearly flat roof. A tall parapet sheathed in crimped steel screens the roof and conveys the illusion that it is flat. The desire to lessen or blur the distinction between interior and exterior was directly related to Neutra's appreciation for and understanding of the Southern California climate. The sliding glass doors are very large, almost the size of the wall itself, enabling occupants to open the interior almost completely to the exterior, providing natural cooling and ventilation. Standardized casement windows and bands of ribbon windows also emphasize the building's horizontal form and convey the machine aesthetic of the day. The absence of decorative ornament further conveys this aesthetic.

The footprint of the single-story garden house is a nearly north-south oriented rectangle, with a centered short rectangular wing. The Garden House is set back six feet from the eastern property line and three feet from the southern property line. North of the Garden House is a carport and driveway that leads from Edgewater Terrace to the north patio with its 1932 Neutra designed incinerator and to the apprentices' room in the basement level of the original wing. The finished floor of the Garden House building sits at an elevation three feet lower than the ground floor of the main house, which enhances the opportunities for integrating interior and exterior space within the complex while allowing a sense of separation.

The garden house plan is simple and efficient. The primary access to the building is through sliding glass doors that open onto the south patio and from the Garden House front door on Edgewater Terrace. Both entrances lead into the southernmost space called the "main room," which is a large living room that is naturally lit throughout the day by extensive glazing on both the eastern and western walls. Built-in furniture, such as low couches, bookshelves and a dining room table, are situated around the perimeter of this room, leaving the center of the space clear. A small kitchen is located in the building's center, to the north of the main room. Stainless steel counters form a "U" around the north, east and south walls of the room, with tall windows rising above the counters on the east wall. Two bedrooms are located north of the kitchen at an elevation two feet lower than the rest of the garden house. The wing, which is located between but does not link the garden house and the main house, is oriented east-west and is accessed only from the garden house. Its program includes another bedroom, the bathroom and a storage space. The wing divides the outdoor space into a southern patio and a smaller, northern patio. The lushly landscaped south patio serves as an outdoor living room, promoting the integration of the indoor and outdoor spaces between the two buildings. The north patio is a more utilitarian space, which includes a barbeque, the Neutra designed incinerator and an exterior staircase. These spaces were designed at approximately the same time as the garden house wing. A mature bougainvillea vine climbs from the south end of the garden house onto the roof.

The east elevation of the Garden House faces Edgewater Terrace and functions as the front entry to this building. It is very similar to the elevation of the 1932 main building, with its transparent front door and its

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horizontal band of steel-casement windows that stretches, uninterrupted, across the east part of the elevation and wraps around to the south. On the north end of this elevation, three large, glass panels allow the bedroom to open up to a shallow pocket garden bounded by a large hedge that provides total visual privacy from the street. In 1940, a garage door opened into this pocket garden, a feature that was used in Neutra's Puerto Rico school designs in 1942. The garage door was replaced by glass panels in the early 1960s when the inside space was divided into the two smaller bedrooms that housed Dion Neutra and his family while he worked on the 1966 rebuilding of the main wing upper levels.

As the oldest completely intact building on the property, the garden house is an extremely important, lasting example of Neutra's work during the late 1930s and early 1940s. The exterior of the garden house retains a high degree of integrity. The elevations appear today as they did at the time of the building's construction, with a large majority of the materials still intact. Though some minor changes have been made to the interior, these changes have not significantly altered the original design and do not diminish the building's integrity. As mentioned above, the "play room" was partitioned into two bedrooms in the early 1960s, during the period of significance. Some changes appear to have been made during that time to the built-in bookshelves and to other interior finishes in the main living space.

VDL Research House Phase III, 1966 Main Building (VDL II)

In March 1963, a fire, possibly electrical in origin, severely damaged the upper levels of the original 1932 VDL Research House building. Luckily, the garden house, landscaped south patio, north patio, and the basement level and concrete foundation of the main house all survived, and the family soon decided to rebuild. Thanks to the efforts of Dion Neutra, an architect, member of the Neutra office and Richard's middle son, the local building department granted the Neutras permission to rebuild on the surviving foundation, as long as the building envelope generally conformed to that of the original house. Hence, in 1963, the collaborative effort at the VDL Research House between father and son began.

The rebuilding of the main house from 1964 to 1966 represents the third period of Neutra's interpretation of Modernism on the VDL site. In this third phase, Richard sought to perpetuate many design concepts introduced in the first house, while also conveying his changing aesthetic as it emerged during the post-war period. The former impulse was expressed through the maintenance of the same building footprint and some of the spatial and organizational decisions found in the original building interior. However, at the time the damaged portion of the main building was rebuilt in the 1960s, Neutra's design aesthetic exhibited a more complex, constructivist integration of interior and exterior spaces. He also incorporated a more complex visual network of reflective and transparent planes that included pools of water, as well as mirrored and transparent surfaces. This evolved aesthetic was the result of both Neutra's own developing thoughts on architecture, as well as the unique circumstances of collaboration with his son Dion. Neutra's commitment to efficient, multi-functioning space is evidenced throughout the property, which, despite its modest 60' x 70' lot, conveys a spacious, meticulously planned living and working environment.

The new upper stories were built on the original, 1932 foundation and concrete joists of the basement level, yet contemporary innovations and materials that were considered experimental at the time were incorporated on the upper floors, reflecting the same research spirit embodied in the original VDL I design and construction. This wing of the house continued to function as the main building on the property and included a mixed-use program.

The VDL II main house design retained the siting of the original VDL I, including the same spatial orientation to the garden house. The south patio created by the short wing of the Garden House continues to function as an outdoor living space. Paving across the patio connects the main house to the garden house, and the 1940s era low, concrete wall continues to provide seating that now surrounds the 1966 small reflecting pool. Low

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vegetation provides a separation of space between the lower sitting area and the 1966 raised wood deck that is located against a masonry wall.

The north patio, still functioning largely as a circulation space, includes three staircases, a planter box and part of the driveway. A brick barbeque and the Neutra-designed incinerator are located at the foot of a spiral staircase that was added with the 1966 redesign and allows access to the second floor of the main house from the carport and exterior of the house. The north patio still runs east along the northern property line from Edgewater Terrace, through the carport, to the garage/ apprentices' rooms.

The VDL Phase III construction consisted of two stories and a penthouse on top of the 1932 basement level. Similar to the 1932 construction, balloon framing was used as the structure for the upper levels of the house. The framing adheres to the 3'-3" module that had been used in the original VDL construction to accommodate standard 3'-0" steel casement windows. This module, used in the garden house as well, gives the VDL complex a consistent visual order; although, steel casements are absent from the VDL II structure.

A concrete path along the edge of a reflecting pond leads to the centrally positioned, recessed entrance to the main house on its western elevation. Rather than treating the entrance as a protective barrier between the public and private realms of the dwelling, the front door consists of large panes of transparent glass that allow visibility from Silver Lake Boulevard through the main house to the garden house. This commitment to transparency, that echoes VDL I, is carried throughout the design of the entrance elevation, though the overall effect is one of separation from the busy street. This is achieved through a constructivist composition of fixed sash, glazed volumes that reduce the noise and air pollution from the street, recessed outdoor spaces that interlock with roof overhangs and structural elements, and six metal louvers that rise from the reflecting pool to the roof. These louvers, first used by Richard Neutra in the early 1940s, are designed to block the hot, westerly sun and to create a visually permeable barrier in front of the actual building.

Throughout the building, structural members, such as roof beams, extend beyond the building envelope. This is especially evident on the building's east elevation where narrow beams are dramatically cantilevered to support planting strips. These details are similar in concept to Richard Neutra's "out-riggers," which he used from the late 1940s until his death in 1970. He believed that these elements would cause the viewer to feel that the building was larger than it actually was, as a result of the illusion that it extended infinitely into space. A stucco band stretching across the exterior elevations of the building visually demarcates between the ground floor and the second floor.

The west or front elevation is composed of horizontal bands of stucco and ribbon windows and the vertical louver system. Sheltered by an overhanging balcony, two entry doors exist in the recessed center of the elevation, one facing east and one facing north. The east-facing door is glass, while the north-facing door is solid redwood. To the north and south of the entrances, the elevation is composed of a grid pattern created by the building's structural framing and window systems. This 3'-3" grid is infilled with glass and stucco, creating horizontal bands across the surface. To the south of the entrances, the six large vertical louvers are positioned approximately twenty-four inches in front of the finished surface of the exterior glass and stucco wall, to provide shade. To the north, the second story roof creates a deep overhang over the fixed sash windows of the first and second floors.

Located on the property line, the south elevation is obscured by the neighboring property's structures and vegetation. It is a fully stucco finished wall, with no demarcation between floors. The only exception is a vertically oriented, reflective window in the upper left corner, which provides light and a view from the bedroom located there. The north elevation, likewise, is not commonly viewed due to its proximity to

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neighboring structures and landscape features. On this elevation, the second floor is articulated with a horizontal band of clearstory windows within a stucco fascia. Similarly, the ground floor is articulated with one window, located on the west end of the elevation.

The east elevation of the Phase III design faces the south and north patios that both separate and connect the main house to the garden house. Similar to the west elevation, the east elevation is composed of horizontal bands of stucco and glazing. Shifted volumes break the plane of the elevation and create a three-dimensional highly articulated composition, rather than a single flat plane. As a result, the east façade appears more dynamic than the west. Both the kitchen on the second floor and the balcony adjacent to Richard's bedroom project beyond the first floor and into the patio spaces. While these features addressed specific functional requirements, they also effectively project the exterior of the house into the open space above the patio. The light, nature of these elements blurs distinctions between indoor and outdoor space. The center portion of the east elevation at the first floor is a transparent void corresponding to the entry. The visually ambiguous demarcation between interior and exterior space is underscored through the restrained use of mirrored surfaces just outside the glass leading to the patio. This relationship is also underscored by the selection of flooring and ceiling materials that continue from the interior to the exterior landing, leading to the patio. In contrast with these layers of transparency, the south end of the ground floor is nearly covered by small, partially dressed stones laid vertically. This was the same material Neutra used to sheath the exterior wall of his Garden Grove Community Church (1962) building.

Above the second level, the roof deck space that had existed in the original main building has been reinterpreted and redesigned more as a penthouse with a west elevation that consists of four floor-to-ceiling glass panels, two of which are sliding doors. The east elevation contains the same arrangement of four glass panels, while the north and south elevations contain two glass panels each. Crowning the penthouse is a circular utility enclosure.

In plan, the building contains three major elements: the central circulation core, the northern wing, which is occupied by public spaces, and the southern wing, which contains private spaces. The ground floor of VDL II functions differently from that of VDL I, because by the late 1960s, many of the team functions of Neutra's architecture office had relocated to Glendale Boulevard. Consequently, the Phase III plan reflects the changing needs of the Neutra family and includes a seminar/music room, kitchenette, and guest room in the area that corresponds to the Studio and office in the original VDL main building. The northern end of the seminar/music room, which was used for Dione's (Mrs. Neutra) musical performances, as well as meetings for Richard's Institute for Survival Through Design can be divided by a sliding door to create a guest room linked to a kitchenette. The kitchenette faces out to the northern patio and retains its original 1960s equipment, including a steel, multi-purpose kitchen unit made by Crane Chef. White linoleum is used as flooring throughout these rooms. South of the main residential entry is a small bathroom with shower and a large, carpeted bedroom used to accommodate guests. Two large mirrors in this room are used to create the illusion of a larger space.

The second floor served the same function as the original main building and housed the Neutra family. It includes a living/dining room, kitchen, outdoor patio with reflecting pool, two bedrooms—one with a balcony and a bathroom. The penthouse described above occupies the top level of the dwelling, which includes the sunroom and a small storage room. A wood deck and large shallow reflecting pond are situated on the roof and extend the living space outdoors with private yet expansive views to the reservoir and beyond.

The Neutras retained the dual function program of residences and workplace for the design of VDL II and careful attention was paid to circulation and the layout of spaces, both interior and exterior. As stated earlier in this section, entry to the seminar room on the first floor is from Silver Lake Boulevard through the redwood door that is perpendicular to the entry path. This door is hidden in a redwood sheathed wall. Entry to the

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residential space is possible through this door; however a separate, glass door at the terminus of the entry path functions as the main residential entrance. This glass-door main entry opens to the small reception space or foyer that contains the suspended staircase leading to the second floor. The existence of these two separate entries is directly related to the 1932 design for VDL I, which specified a separate entrance for each function of the house, with no direct access between the two. The 1966 design maintains the two entries even though the two functions inside the building are no longer physically separated on the first level. North of the first-floor studio entrance, a west-facing wall of floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors brings the outdoors into a large, L-shaped seminar and recital room, admitting abundant natural light.

The stairs leading to the second floor are suspended from a balustrade of thin, steel rods and supported by a steel stringer. The stairs are open to the seminar room, as well as to a small, outdoor terrace. The treads, solid slats of wood covered in carpet, lead to the residential part of the house. On the second floor, the living/dining room is located in the northwest corner of the house, directly above the seminar room and music room. It is an L-shaped room with a band of windows that allows for views of the reservoir and surrounding hills. Beneath these windows, a low, built-in bookcase runs the length of the room on the west wall, terminating at a built-in, south-facing couch on the north wall. Lighting at the base of the bookcase has the effect of making it appear to float at night. The dining area is located in the northeast corner of the room and also includes a built-in couch, with a surviving curtain track suggesting a means of separating the living and dining spaces. There is no evidence that a curtain was ever hung between the spaces. In the 1966 phase of the compound, however, Rosewood Formica is used on the walls in the living/dining room, where the floors are carpeted. In addition, a pass-through with fold-back doors allows food to be easily transported from the kitchen to the dining area. These design features allow the house to function well for both casual and formal purposes, and easily supported the Neutras' interest in entertaining guests in the house.

A tiled sitting porch with a pebble-lined reflecting pond is located south of the living room. The living room can be completely open to the porch through two sliding glass doors, and historical photographs indicate that the tiles of the porch are similar in color to the original carpeting in the living room, further emphasizing that the porch is a continuation of the living room space. Outdoor lighting on the sitting porch and throughout the exterior of VDL II is provided by strip lighting in the eaves of the overhangs. These lights serve three purposes: they provide diffused outdoor lighting, eliminate reflective glare on the inside of the windows caused by interior lighting, and create reflections at night on the outside of the windows, which create a visual barrier from outside to inside the house. A slot in the west overhang was meant to accommodate a vertical awning of the sort used in VDL I. There is no documentation indicating that the awning ever was installed.

The kitchen is located along the east side of the house, providing views toward the north and east. High windows rise above built-in birch cabinets. Many of the original, 1960s built-in kitchen appliances are still extant. In order to expand the kitchen area beyond the dimensions of the 1932 kitchen, the new kitchen was cantilevered beyond the basic building form, to provide additional square footage. This also has the effect of pushing the kitchen further into outside space and creating a more dynamic interplay between exterior and interior. Just south of the kitchen, a glass door opens onto a bridge, which leads to a spiral staircase, providing direct access to the carport and Edgewater Terrace. The bridge is bordered on the south by a wide planter box which, functions both as a planter and as a railing for the elevated bridge.

South of the kitchen, an open circulation area houses a breakfast nook and provides access to other parts of the second floor. A low, birch-laminated cabinet serves as a barrier between the breakfast nook and the stairs, allowing the stairs to be open to the room, while preventing an accidental fall into the stairwell. This extensive use of built-in cabinetry is indicative of Neutra's ability to creatively and efficiently maximize space. A large window in the nook faces east toward the south patio, creating a panoramic view of the Chinese elm (*Ulmus*

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parvifolia) in the courtyard and the distant hillside. On hot days, this window can slide along a track to the south that spans between the cantilevered kitchen and a cantilevered balcony. When the window is in the open position the breakfast nook feels and can function like a screened porch, by allowing fresh air, as well as sounds and aromas from the outdoors, to enter the house. This feature was incorporated in the 1966 design by Dion Neutra in response to his mother's desire to have a porch where she could sit.

Beyond the breakfast nook is a corridor leading to two bedrooms and a bathroom. The east side of this single-loaded corridor is composed of a ribbon band of windows, causing the corridor to feel like a tree house with intimate views of the south patio. At the terminus of the corridor lies Richard Neutra's bedroom. The bedroom contains built-in furnishings, including a desk, bed and closet. Above the bed is a sizeable control panel from which he could control the sun louvers, lighting and speakers throughout the house. His western window provides a close-up view of the six large louvers, the tree foliage beyond, as well as the more distant reservoir and hills. A cantilevered balcony extends eastward from Neutra's bedroom, over the south patio. A steel-framed, glass wall to the south protects the patio from the southern sun and provides some privacy from the neighbors. This wall also causes the patio to feel more like an outdoor room than a mere balcony, because it gives the space a sense of enclosure.

Dione Neutra's (Mrs. Neutra) room is also located off of the second floor corridor. Like her husband's bedroom, it contains built-in furniture: a bed that is hinged to the wall, enabling it to swing outward for ease of maintenance, and a desk. The height of the built-in bed was calculated with care, so that when lying down, one has an eye-level view of the reservoir through a large window on the west wall. This window also provides a view of the second-floor reflecting pool. A floor-to-ceiling mirror on the north wall at the foot of her bed also serves as a hidden door to the adjacent patio space between her room and the living room. Expansive closet space in both bedrooms allows the modest-size rooms to remain uncluttered.

A bathroom is positioned between Richard's and Dione's rooms. The bathroom is small, with a pedestal sink, mirror and toilet on its south wall and a sunken shower on its north wall. It also houses additional closet space. The shower is sunk into the floor, so its user does not have to step over the typical low tub wall. The elimination of this tub wall helps ameliorate the confined feeling of the room. The bathroom's west wall includes a large window with views of the reservoir through the louvers. The rest of the walls are sheathed in tile.

The penthouse is accessed from a staircase located in the sitting porch between the living room and Dione's room. The small glass-enclosed room is a carpeted space in which the visitor is encouraged to sit on the floor, lean against backrests and look out toward the reservoir. The backrests are mounted on the window mullions at heights that correspond to heights of the lower back. The only other furnishings are floor pillows and low stools. A small storage room and an elevator shaft are located in the northeast corner of the sunroom. Two of the large glass panels on the west side of the sunroom are sliding glass doors that, when open, allow the sunroom to be swept with fresh air.

To the west of the sunroom, a wood deck permits outdoor visiting or seating. Surrounding this deck is a low planter box that serves as a low railing, without blocking the panoramic views of the reservoir, San Gabriel Mountains and surrounding area. A two-inch-deep, reflecting roof pond starts south of the wood deck and continues around the sunroom to the south and east, creating the illusion that the sunroom is actually floating on the water. This reflecting pond is a particularly important feature of the house, as it was incorporated to compensate for the movement of the reservoir's edge an additional 500 feet away from the house in 1950s. It was established to recreate the visual connection that the house originally had with the reservoir from the 1930s through the 1950s. As such, it has become a character-defining feature of the VDL II design.

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VDL Research House, Integrity

The overall integrity of the VDL Research remains very high. Few changes have been made to the property after Richard Neutra's death in 1970. Only one change was additive and the others addressed needed repairs and maintenance. In the mid-1980s Dion had an elevator installed to the main house at the request of his mother; however, the shaft was original to the 1966 Phase III design. In the late 1990s, the director of the VDL House, Kevin O'Brien, an architect and lecturer in the department of architecture at Cal Poly Pomona, designed and oversaw the rehabilitation of the roof ponds adjacent to the penthouse, which had been leaking. Between 2010 and 2012, Resident Director and now Architectural Department Chairperson Sarah Lorenzen worked with Dion Neutra, the firm of Marmol and Radziner, and the Los Angeles Office of Historic Preservation, to replace the roofing materials of three of the roof surfaces of the house that also had been leaking. They also replaced cracked and unsafe glass in the penthouse. The goal was to meet current material requirements while retaining the original look of the structure. Any other work on the property has been in the form of minor maintenance and repair. Dione Neutra continued to live in the house until her death on September 1, 1990. She willed the property and its contents to the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. A faculty member has lived in the Garden House Wing since then.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G X

NHL Criteria: 2: Associated importantly with life of a person nationally significant in history of USA

NHL Criteria Exceptions: Consideration 8

NHL Theme(s): III Expressing Cultural Values, Architecture

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1932-1970

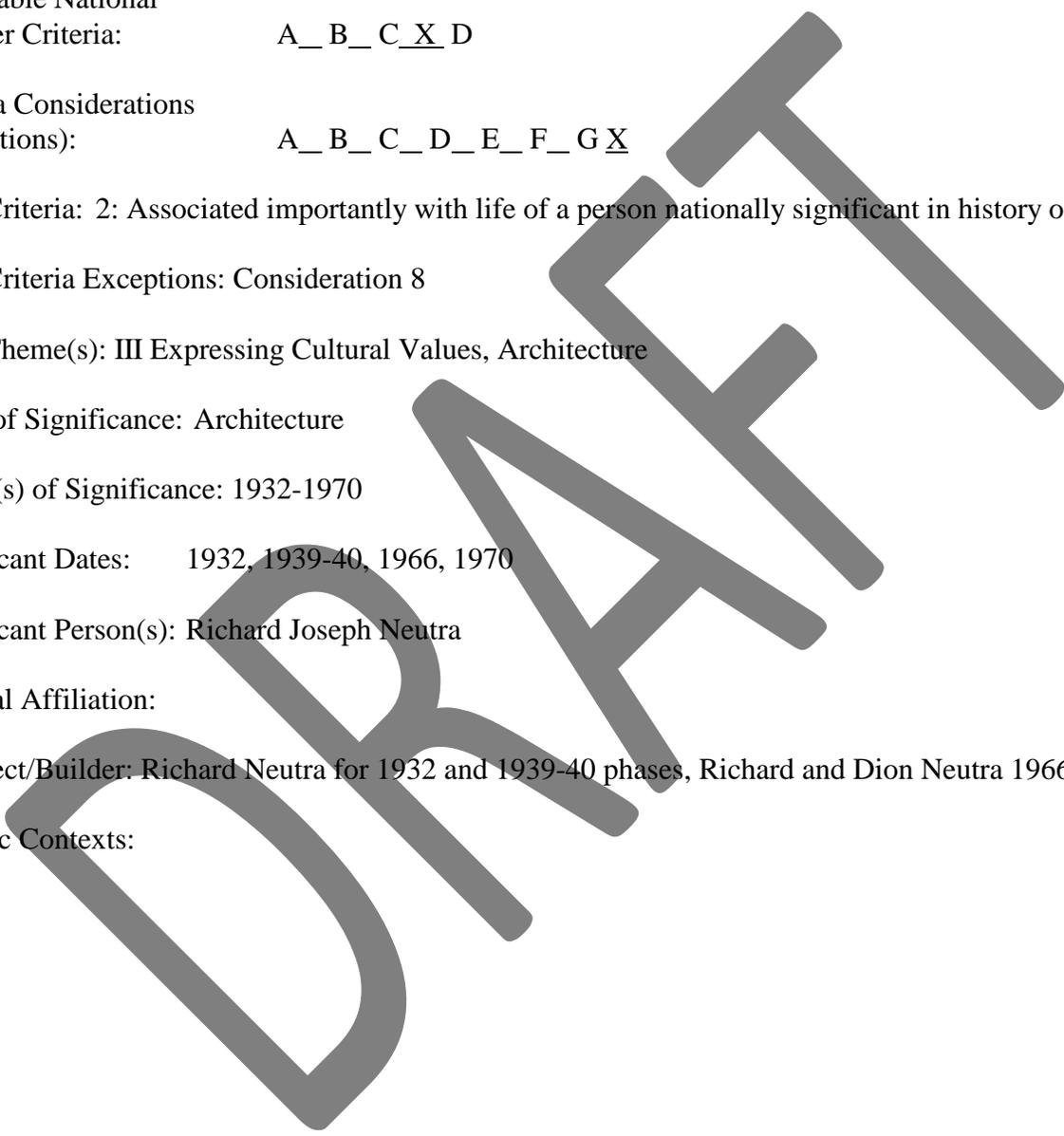
Significant Dates: 1932, 1939-40, 1966, 1970

Significant Person(s): Richard Joseph Neutra

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: Richard Neutra for 1932 and 1939-40 phases, Richard and Dion Neutra 1966 phase

Historic Contexts:



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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The VDL Research House is Significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 2, in association with Richard Neutra, a nationally significant architect. The property is directly and importantly associated with Neutra's life and career. The VDL Studio and Residences is among the key properties to understand the national significance of his work.. It is the only property where one can see the progression of Neutra's style over a period of several years. Richard Neutra is a nationally and internationally seminal figure of the twentieth century Modern movement in architecture. As his work evolved, during the 1940s, Neutra also became well recognized founder of mid-century "California Modern" architecture.

Richard Neutra is perhaps best known for his Lovell "Health" House and the Kauffman Desert House. However, it is Neutra's larger body of work that has had a lasting impact on architectural design in the United States and abroad. In addition to the buildings he designed, Neutra also heavily influenced how this architecture would be presented to the public. Together with photographer Julius Shulman, Neutra showed how this architecture could be presented to the media in a fashion that is now iconic and synonymous with the Modern movement in architecture. Perhaps less well known is Neutra's deep interest in architectural phenomenology and the neuroscience of interior and exterior space that underpin his work and set him apart from his colleagues His interest in these areas of study and the integration of the findings into his design approach prefigure the resurgence of these fields in our own time. He wrote extensively on these subjects and was dedicated to translating these principles into healthy human environments through his designs.

Richard Neutra's renown has been recognized both within and outside the architecture profession. Neutra appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine (1949) and in 1977 received a posthumous American Institute of Architects (AIA) Gold Medal, the highest honor the AIA can bestow on an individual in recognition of a significant body of work of lasting influence on the theory and practice of architecture. Today, exhibitions and scholarly publications continue to focus on Neutra and his work.

The VDL Research House is directly and importantly associated with the life and career of Richard Neutra. From 1932 to 1970, Neutra lived at the VDL Research House and he did the vast majority of his work there. He used each phase of construction to demonstrate to prospective clients and the general public his design goals, innovative use of materials, the spatial integration of indoor and outdoor space and his means for achieving them. Neutra also used the unusual design of the VDL Research House to attract clients and leaders of the modern movement, which helped Neutra and his musician wife Dione to network and create a cultural salon in the country where they had become citizens.

Today, the Neutra VDL compound is the best place to understand Neutra's nearly 40 years of work including his design philosophies for creating healthy built environments for everyday people. Unlike the more opulent most published works, the Research House responds to the design challenge that most interested Neutra: how to create a humane indoor-outdoor, multi-household environment on a small urban space with a small budget. Richard Neutra spoke to this point in an essay that was included in his posthumously published book *Nature Near*:

I was convinced that high-density design could succeed in a fully human way and I saw my new house as a concrete pilot project. I wanted to demonstrate that human beings, brought together in close proximity, can be accommodated in very satisfying

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circumstances, taking in that precious amenity called privacy . . . I planted three families on my ordinary sixty-by-seventy foot lot, next to Silver Lake. And I was able to arrange things in such a way as to embellish our lives with abundant plantings and bracing vistas...there were many options for getting off by oneself – along with many more for group work, socializing and various cultural activities.

The VDL Research House shows, in a single location, how Neutra's approach to this challenge evolved in the 1930s, '40s and '60s.

The significance of the property has been recognized by the City of Los Angeles with its designation as Los Angeles Cultural Monument Number 640. The VDL Research House also was the subject of a Preserve L.A. Grant, awarded by the Getty Foundation in 2002. Since 2008, Cal Poly Pomona and the Friends of the Neutra Research Site have raised more than \$350,000 to assure a safe electrical system and repair leaking roofs. In 2009, it was included in the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance, under Criterion C, and under Criteria Consideration G, as an exceptionally significant work in the context of Richard Neutra's practice.

Architectural Education and Design Philosophy

Richard Neutra was born on April 8, 1892, in Otto Wagner's Vienna, Austria.² His formative years and awareness of architecture and design were influenced by Wagner's imprint on the Viennese landscape as well as the beliefs and work of others who were part of the Viennese Secession movement. Neutra entered the Vienna Institute of Technology and studied with pro-American architect Adolph Loos. Adolph Loos had written a well-known essay, "Ornament and Crime" that was published in 1913. He believed that architects had a responsibility to provide lasting satisfaction for their clients, that architects needed to resist stylish self-expression and that the two were intertwined. Neutra was deeply influenced by Loos, who would become his mentor.³ Elena Altman Loos recalled her husband's fondness of Neutra in her book, *Mein Leben mit Adolf Loos*:

From the group of his pre-war students, he always singled out with particular tenderness the later world-famous architect Richard Neutra. He always said that Neutra was his only student who had the real talent and ability to become a great architect... After the war, Neutra went to Berlin and worked there. Loos had told him so much about America that he, together with his wife and young child, decided to take his chances and to emigrate, without a prospective job or security. He came to Vienna to say good bye to Loos. I clearly remember Loos' happy expression as he said to me "Neutra has gone to America."⁴

Neutra also was deeply moved by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, who gained attention in Europe through publication of the Wasmuth Portfolio in 1910. The portfolio contained one hundred plates depicting Wright's designs accompanied by a text that he had written. Neutra had viewed this monograph, was impacted by the work and would later briefly work for Wright.⁵

Neutra's approach to architectural design also was deeply influenced by his readings in psychology. He had an early interest in the psychology of what people experience when they encounter architecture. In his 1920 letters to Dione Niedermann, his bride-to-be, Neutra wrote about architectural

² Thomas Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 11-38.

³ Janet Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna: Adolf Loos's Cultural Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2000), 173.

⁴ Elsie Altmann Loos, *Mein Leben mit Adolf Loos*, Vienna 2013 (new edition based on the edition of 1984), 104

⁵ Richard Neutra, *Life and Human Habitat. Mensch und Wonen* (Stuttgart: A. Koch, 1956), 88.

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phenomenology—that is to say, how we experience architecture not only by sight, but also in terms of sounds, smells, breezes on the skin and so on.⁶ Neutra's early interest in a physiological psychology and what constituted good design was informed by the works of well-known psychologist, William Wundt.⁷

Wundt's textbook, *Principles of Physiological Psychology*, was first published in 1874 and went through many editions. The text reflected the author's wide interests, ranging from psychophysics to phenomenology. This deep interest or conviction influenced Neutra's work throughout his career, both in what he designed and in what he wrote.

In the 1940s, Neutra began writing a series of essays on what people do, how people interact and what people consciously and unconsciously experience in designed indoor and outdoor environments. These essays culminated in the publication of his ground-breaking 1954 book, *Survival Through Design*.⁸ In this book, Neutra expressed his conviction that primates and hominids had evolved over millions of years to fit into a temperate, subtly changing natural environment and that technology needed to be designed and assembled into architecture and city plans, to again include these conditions.⁹

Although the book was favorably reviewed by Maxwell Fry in *Arts and Architecture*, Robert Hutchins in *The Nation*, and by Douglas Haskell in the cover story of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, some architects at the time expressed skepticism about the practical value of these ideas.¹⁰ However, half a century later with a growing interest in the multi-sensory phenomenology of architecture and an evolution of brain science and its application to architecture from such organizations as the Academy for Neuroscience for Architecture in San Diego, or in books such as *Biophilic Design*,¹¹ there is a growing interest in the topics that so interested Richard Neutra and established him as an early proponent of human ecology based design.¹² Harry Francis Malgrave, architect and professor of history and theory devotes a large part of a chapter in his 2011 book *The Architect's Brain to Survival Through Design* and says:

Neutra's book is a vast repository filled with trenchant observations, as he was the first architect in recent times to consider design from a strict neurological perspective...All in all, Neutra's book remains a milestone in looking at architecture from the vantage point of human ecology... And even if today his book still might be a little too "cerebral" for mass consumption, it deserves to be rediscovered and become standard fare within our architectural schools....¹³

Neutra's Immigration to the United States and His Early Work 1922 through 1940

Within a decade of commencing his professional career as an architect, Richard Neutra had established himself at the forefront of modernist architecture in the United States. After serving in World War I and completing his architectural training at the Vienna Institute of Technology, Neutra worked with the Swiss landscape architect Gustav Ammann, to design a forest cemetery near Berlin. Soon thereafter, Neutra worked as a design architect with Eric Mendelsohn.¹⁴ Their 1922 design competition entry for a commercial center in Haifa Palestine was selected as the winner, although never built. Using his share of prize money from the competition, Neutra immigrated to the United States in 1923. He worked in

⁶ Dione Neutra, *Richard Neutra, Promise and Fulfillment* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 18.

⁷ Richard Neutra, *Life*, 88.

⁸ Richard Neutra, *Survival Through Design* (New York: Oxford Press, 1954).

⁹ Neutra, *Survival Through Design*, 26.

¹⁰ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 242-243.

¹¹ Stephen R. Kellert, Judith H. Heerwagen and Martin L. Mador, eds., *Biophilic Design* (Holden NJ: John Wiley, 2008).

¹² Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005).

¹³ Henry Francis Malgrave, *The Architect's Brain* (Malden MA: Wiley/Blackwell 2011), 107-108.

¹⁴ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search*, 17-60.

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architectural offices in New York and Chicago, where he met Louis Sullivan and then his idol Frank Lloyd Wright, at Sullivan's funeral. In early 1925, after three months of working for Wright, he then joined his friend and former university colleague, Rudolph Schindler in Los Angeles.

During the next three years and less than seven years following his arrival in the United States, Richard Neutra established himself as a Modernist pioneer. His 1927 reinforced concrete "International Style" Jardinette Apartments that he and Rudolph Schindler submitted for the League of Nations design competition, and his radical 1929 steel Lovell Health House, one of his best known projects, firmly placed Neutra at the forefront of Modernist architectural design in the United States during the 1920s.

When the Health House was completed, Neutra's naturopath client Dr. Lovell wrote about the design in his daily *Los Angeles Times* column "Care of the Body:"

I have periodically written articles on how to build your house so that you can derive from it the maximum degree of health and beauty...We have built such a home, a home premised on the fundamental health principles and construction ideas which I have presented in my writings....¹⁵

Lovell went on to invite his public readership to visit the home on four successive weekends. The thousands who visited could also read Lovell's posted testimonial to Neutra's careful study of Lovell's detailed social and hygienic programmatic needs.¹⁶

The Lovell House received widespread attention in the United States and abroad.¹⁷ Even the usually critical Frank Lloyd Wright lauded Neutra, his former apprentice, in a 1929 letter stating:

The boys tell me that you are building a building in steel for residence, ideas like that are what this poor fool country needs to learn from Corbusier, Stevens, Oud and Gropius. I am glad you're the one to "teach" them . . .¹⁸

In 1932, the Lovell Health House and Neutra's innovative 1926 Ring Plan School design were included in the Museum of Modern Art's inaugural architectural exhibit *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition [MoMA Exh. #15, February 9-March 23, 1932]*. Special Director of the exhibit, Phillip Johnson, who would later become a well-known architect, stated in a press release for the exhibit that, "Leaders of the new 'International Style' will be represented by models in the comprehensive exhibition . . . They have been chosen as representing the highest artistic achievement in twentieth century architecture."¹⁹ Photos and information about the Lovell House also were published in the accompanying book.²⁰

¹⁵ Thomas Hines, *Architecture of the Sun: Modernism in Los Angeles 1913-1970* (New York: Rizzoli, 2010), 314.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 315.

¹⁷ "The Demonstration Health House, Los Angeles," *Architectural Record*, 1930 Apr., v. 67, p. 433-439; also see, Richard Neutra, "Architecture Conditioned by Engineering and Industry," *Architectural Record*, 1929 Sept., v. 66, p. 272-274; also see, Roger Ginsberger, "Dwelling and Open Air School (in one) near Los Angeles," *Cahiers d'Art*, 1930, v. 5, n. 6, p. 330-332; also see, "Gesundheitshaus in Kalifornien," *Form* [Stockholm], 1930 July 1, v. 5, n. 13, p. 350-354.

¹⁸ Dione Neutra, *Richard Neutra, Promise.*, 178; Wright was later true to his tendencies and became critical of what he perceived as Neutra's self-promotion.

¹⁹ Museum of Modern Art, New York., For Release, 1932.

[https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/64/releases/MOMA_1932_0001_1932-01-16.pdf?2010, accessed on September 30, 2014.

²⁰ Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1932), 197.

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During this time Neutra also wrote two influential books, the 1927 *Wie Baut Amerika* and *Amerika Neues Bauen in Die Welt* (1930). Both publications were enthusiastically received in Europe, Russia and Japan. The books included description of American technology and architectural organization and Neutra's theoretical urban planning and modern school studies, "Rush City Reformed," which he later presented in Brussels at the third International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) in 1930, where he was the American delegate.²¹

In *Wie Baut Amerika* Neutra provided details of everyday practices that Americans took for granted. He illustrated his text with photographs by Modernist photographers Edward and Bret Weston and with other photographs of projects by Irving Gill, Frank Lloyd Wright, Lloyd Wright, Bruce Goff and Schindler. He also painted for the Europeans and a few receptive Americans a vision of a new architecture based on assemblage. Neutra envisioned that assembly lines in large factories could manufacture entire houses, schools, hospitals, etc., or manufacture the elements from which such facilities could be quickly assembled on site.

Neutra envisioned these factories to have sufficient profits to pay for sociological and physiological research of the sort that German psychologist Hugo Munsterberg (Wilhelm Wundt's student) had done in an industrial setting. Neutra believed that this would lead to healthy neighborhoods, houses, schools and hospitals, just as Munsterberg, Scott, Taylor and the Gilbreths (the leading industrial engineers and psychologists) had produced healthier and more functional factories. Neutra was committed to the belief that buildings, assembled with elements from a myriad of suppliers could, like an automobile, appear as an aesthetically convincing whole, and without the constraints or appearance of historic techniques of construction.

Sociologist and political economist, Mauro Guillen has pointed out in his book, *The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical*, that Neutra would not have been alone in this hope.²¹ Europeans, Japanese and Russians were fascinated by Taylorism and Henry Ford. As an outsider, eager to become an insider, Neutra did his best to make it seem that the Americans were as modern in their aesthetics as they were in their technology, hoping that an imaginary America that was already doing what he dreamed of doing would be a more effective motivator.²²

The innovation reflected in *Wie Baut Amerika* was recognized at the time of publication. In a review of the manuscript for the *Architectural Record* in June 1928, the influential architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock wrote that Neutra was:

. . . one of the less than half a dozen architects working in this country—all but Wright, of whom he is the only worthy follower, foreign-trained—who are as fully convinced as the leaders of French, German and Dutch architecture of the essential relation between modern design and the methods and materials it works with.²³

After publication of his books, completion of the Lovell Health House and the 1929 financial collapse, Neutra travelled to Europe and attended the third CIAM Congress in Brussels.²⁴ During this European visit a pivotal course of events occurred that lead to Neutra designing and constructing the VDL Research House. He met Dutch industrialist Kees van der Leeuw, who had read Neutra's *Wie Baut*

²¹ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search* 87-129.

²² Neutra *Life* 195; also see, Richard Neutra, *Wie Baut Amerika?* (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann's Verlag, 1927), 66. Translated from the original German by Raymond R. Neutra.

²³ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Review of *Wie Baut Amerika*," *Architectural Record* 63 (June 1928): 594-595, in Hines *Search* 84).

²⁴ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search*, 113.

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Amerika, and found in it a kindred thinker.

Neutra's interest in Wilhelm Wundt and his focus on health in the design of the Lovell Health House represented an area of mutual interest with van der Leeuw. According to Scholar Frank Kauffman, van der Leeuw's interest in industrial psychology was reflected in the volumes on the subject that were a part of van der Leeuw's library.²⁵ Indeed, van der Leeuw, who within a few years would leave his industrial position to study medicine, psychoanalysis and psychiatry in Vienna, had spent the previous decade visiting modern factories all over the world, studying research on ergonomics, work physiology and work sociology. He applied these findings, in the role of discerning client, to his now famous 1930 Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam, designed by Brinkman & Van der Vlugt and Ir. J.G. Wiebenga. The factory is now on the UNESCO World Heritage List (inscribed, 2014).

Another common interest between Neutra and van der Leeuw was admiration for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. In addition to working for Wright, Neutra, who named his first son Frank, repeatedly acknowledged Wright's influence upon him.²⁶ Van der Leeuw also was familiar with Wright's work and was a patron of the Wright-influenced architects Brinkman and van der Vlugt who had designed the residences at the Theosophical camp at Omen, the Theosophical Temple in Amsterdam, Van der Leeuw's 1928 house and the 1930 Van Nelle Factory, both located in Rotterdam.²⁷ In all of these projects, the integration of indoor outdoor spaces was centrally important to van der Leeuw, just as they were to the Wright-influenced Neutra.²⁸

Van der Leeuw had learned of Neutra's visit to Europe, whereupon he invited him to Holland to lecture and to meet the Dutch architects, Leendert van der Vlugt (architect UNESCO listed Van Nelle Factory), Jan Duiker, Bernard Bijvoet, Gerrit Rietveld, Jacobus Oud (included in Johnson & Hitchcock's International Style Exhibit) and Cornelius van Eesteren (CIAM chairman 1930-47).

Van der Leeuw would again reach out to Neutra a year and a half later on May 18, 1931, after van der Leeuw, then president of the International Industrial Relations Association, gave a lecture on the modern factory in Los Angeles. A Los Angeles Times announcement of the lecture noted that the "internationally famous" local architect Richard Neutra would be in attendance.²⁹

Neutra has described this visit, which would prove significant for him and arguably important for the history of American architecture, as follows:

I felt happy . . . when CH Van der Leeuw, the Dutch magnate, suddenly announced by wire from New York that he was flying to Los Angeles . . . and the Health House was on the agenda. He saw it in the flesh and loved it. Full of praise, he was driven about by me in my third-hand ancient Chevrolet.

²⁵ Frank Kauffman, "The Spiritual Legacy of Kees van der Leeuw," in *Van Nelle, Monument in Progress*, A.M. Backer, D. Camp and M. Dicke, eds. (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij De Hef Publishers, 2005), 63.

²⁶ Thomas S. Hines, "Disciples and Masters: Schindler, Neutra, Wright," in Alan Hess, *Wright: The Houses*, (New York Rizzoli 2005), 214-225.

²⁷ Mariette van Straalen, "Wright in Holland," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond*, A. Alfosin, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁸ Kauffman, 48.

²⁹ Anonymous, "Architecture to be Theme of Dutch Speaker," *Los Angeles Times* (May 18, 1931), I-3.

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When I pulled up at his hotel and we shook hands for goodbye, he looked at me and said, “Why don’t you build a house for yourself?” Taken aback, I answered, “Oh...err—I have not the funds to do any such thing!”

He pulled out a checkbook and asked, “How much do you need?”

I almost toppled over . . . “I could not accept a gift,” I said.

“Well,” he retorted, “I’ll loan it to you without interest. No? All right, you pay me three per cent and you build your house. How is that?”

Finally I heard my voice accepting, mentioning a ridiculously low figure. He signed the check: I closed the car door and contemplated him entering the hotel lobby.³⁰

In a letter from Neutra’s wife Dione to her parents in Switzerland, she wrote about how important this live-work space was going to be in her husband’s creative life:

Finally the miracle has occurred, most wonderful news. A patron has loaned us money so that Richard may demonstrate in a small house what kind of progressive materials are available price-wise and that such a small dwelling need not be “uncomfortable” or have a “hospital-like” atmosphere. In this manner we will acquire a house and an office designed by Richard where he can demonstrate his ideas. Not having had this has been a great disadvantage and we set great hopes on this project.³¹

In pulling out his checkbook in May of 1931 and writing a check for \$3000, about half the cost of the median American house in 1932, van der Leeuw literally provided the means for Neutra to build a demonstration live-work space that would exhibit an amply defined program that was informed by social and biological science, and open to nature.³² Neutra developed the design and implementation in a way that he believed was uniquely possible in the United States – assembled with materials, elements and appliances available in Sweet’s Catalogue. It would be a case-study that would eventually translate to other efforts in the U. S. and Europe.

Indeed, in designing and building the 1929 Lovell Health House to fit the very specific needs of his client and his own demonstration VDL Research House in 1932, Neutra was carrying out a one-man case study program of sorts more than a decade before the famous *Arts and Architecture* Case Study House Program that he prefigured. Perhaps it was not surprising that when the Case Study House Program was announced, Neutra as well as his former apprentice, Raphael Soriano were two of the few architects chosen to participate.

The primary goal of the Case Study House program was to demonstrate through cases rather than lectures and speculation ways to address post-war housing needs. The program also provided an opportunity for innovative architects to imagine, experiment, design and construct what they consider the ideal home for a postwar American family. In the words of John Entenza, editor of the magazine and mastermind of the program,

³⁰ Richard Neutra, *Life and Shape* (New York: Appleton-Century Croft, 1962), 263-264.

³¹ Dione Neutra, *Richard Neutra, Promise and Fulfillment* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 227.

³² “The People History: What Things Cost in 1932”:[<http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/1932.html>], accessed on December 9, 2015.

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We are within the limits of uncontrollable feats, proposing to begin immediately the study, planning, and actual specifications of a special living problem in the Southern California area. Eight nationally known architects, chosen not only for their obvious talents, but for their ability to evaluate realistically housing in terms of need have been commissioned to take a plot of God's green earth and create "good" living conditions for eight American families.³³

Hines states in his chapter for the book *Blue Prints in Modern Living : History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* that Neutra's work "in the interwar period formed the quintessential cluster of prototypes for the program. It is appropriate that he designed four houses for Case Study – more than anyone else on Entenza's list."³⁴

During the interwar period, Neutra had completed no less than 48 projects.³⁵ It was during this period that the architects Gregory Ain, Harwell Harris, Joseph Alan Stein and Raphael Soriano worked for various periods of time at the Neutra VDL Studio and Residences. The first three would go on to become heads of departments of architecture, in Pennsylvania, Texas and Bombay, India, respectively.³⁶ Raphael Soriano also went on to a distinguished career.³⁷

The projects of this 1925-1940 period, exhibit the dual influence of Neutra's two mentors – Loos in the practical un-ornamented materiality and Wright in the intertwined dependence and connectedness of indoor and outdoor. They exemplified an American version of modernism that Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson called "the International Style." For Neutra, it was a time of enthusiastic exploration of industrial-technological *means* toward achieving his goals of accommodating the doings, interactions and sensory experiences of his varied clientele.

Neutra developed and demonstrated many of these explorations in his design of the VDL Research House. In the original 1932 design of the VDL, Neutra introduced for the first time in his own oeuvre, large Wrightian overhangs with under-eave broad screens to allow the flat-roof plenum to breathe. As an integral linear element in these overhangs, he introduced strips of light to visually bring the outside in at night for dramatic effect. Folding steel and glass doors opened the living room to an outdoor socialization area. He also employed transparency to the extent that even the front door was largely glass, a feature that he used in a number of his houses, including the 1940 Garden House Wing of the Neutra compound, the 1942 Nesbitt, the 1946 Kaufmann and the 1966 Richard and Dion Neutra VDL Phase III design. He also used mirrors strategically and subtly to make small spaces seem large. He experimented with in-wall reflective foil and insulation and designed retractable vertical awnings into his overhangs. He used prefabricated vibrated reinforced concrete joists tied into the reinforced slab poured on easily removable forms. From below in the surviving "apprentices' room," these still can be seen today. All of these 1932 features show up in Neutra's other works, and his evolution of these signature elements also are present in the 1940 and 1966 phases of the VDL compound.

Neutra tirelessly promoted his ideas and the research house. He solicited donations of innovative

³³ John Entenza, "Announcement: the Case Study House Program," *Arts & Architecture*. (January 1945), 54.

³⁴ Thomas S. Hines, "Case Study Houses : In the Grand Modern Tradition" in *Blue Prints in Modern Living : History and Legacy of the Case Study House* (1999, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press): *The Case Study House Program*, Arts & Architecture. (January 1945), 54-55

³⁵ Hines, *Search*, 332-333.

³⁶ Anthony Denzer, *Gregory Ain* (New York, Rizzoli, 2008); also see Lisa Germany, *Harwell Hamilton Harris* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Stephen White, *Building in the Garden: the Architecture of Joseph Alan Stein in California and India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³⁷ Wolfgang Wagener, *Raphael Soriano* (London, New York: Phaedon, 2002).

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materials from manufacturers and encouraged them to use his experimental live-work space in their advertisements. A 1936 Oldsmobile advertisement included the Neutra VDL compound as a backdrop with the title, "Modern to the Minute." He sent photographs and text about the VDL "Research House" to publishers, who often responded positively and enthusiastically.³⁸ The November 1934 issue of *Architectural Forum* dedicated fifteen pages, including full and half-page photographs and drawings of the Neutra VDL "Research House." The photos illustrated the unique features both day and night. The night pictures in particular represent a way of seeing and depicting residential architecture that stand out among the images of residences in the architectural magazines of that era and showed the soffit strip lighting and the extensive use of indirect lighting as seen from both outside and inside.³⁹

The VDL Research House was unto itself a demonstration of what we now consider character defining in much of Richard Neutra's body of work. Serving both as residence and studio, a considerable number of Neutra's projects were designed at the VDL compound. A few of the most innovative distinguished and best known projects that were designed at the Neutra VDL compound are described below. These projects illustrate both Neutra's national significance and the direct association of his life and work to the VDL Research House.

The 1934 Gold Medal for small houses was awarded to Neutra's Melba and William Beard House, Altadena, California. It continued the use of shade overhangs and roof garden first used by Neutra at VDL. He also introduced new technology in the design with the use of Robertson load bearing and ventilating steel Robertson wall panels that were tied into a reinforced concrete slab that had hot air radiant heating. The Beard House featured the first steel and glass sliding doors that would become an integral part of Neutra's designs instead of the steel folding doors used in phase one of VDL.

The client was William Beard, an engineering professor at Cal Tech and son of the famous historians Charles and Mary Beard, who had recommended their friend Richard Neutra to their son. The following quote from the Beards to Neutra after they had moved into the residence captures the sense of purpose and social statement beyond aesthetics that many of his earliest clients sought to make when commissioning these modern houses.

The simple interior and metal furniture, the absence of needless halls and stairs, the effective kitchen layout conspire to make household operations rapid and effective, leaving time for other things ... this elimination of any need for servants, has proved a second welcome relief to us. The home thereby comes to be a house of good cheer rather than a chore...The very act of living in such a home is a challenge to all hypocrisy, and a stimulus to clear thinking and efficient living which undoubtedly has a positive influence on our thoughts and deeds.⁴⁰

Neutra used the same Robertson wall panel system in the widely publicized and dramatic house designed for the movie director Josef von Sternberg (later bought by author Ayn Rand).⁴¹

³⁸ Anonymous, "Research house, Los Angeles, California," *House and Garden* 70 (1936). Anonymous, "V.D.L. Research House, Los Angeles California," *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 15 (July 1938): 163. Anonymous, "The V.D.L. Research House," *California Arts and Architecture* 47 (January 1935): 27.

³⁹ Anonymous, "VDL Research House," *Architectural Forum*, LXI, no. 5 (Nov. 1934): 357-372.

⁴⁰ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search*, 174.

⁴¹ Dion Neutra, *The Neutras Then and Later* (Barcelona: Triton, 2012), 37; also see, "The Josef von Sternberg house, San Fernando Valley, California: architect, Richard J. Neutra," *Architect & Building News*, 1936 Sept. 18, v. 147, p. 346-348; also see, "La villa del regista von Sternberg di Richard J. Neutra," *Casabella*, 1936 Sept., v. 14, p. 617; "The Josef von Sternberg house, San Fernando Valley, California: architect, Richard J. Neutra," *Kokusai kenchiku*, 1936 Sept., v. 12, p. 238-243; "House for Josef von Sternberg,

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Another small project was the Grace Miller “Mensendieck” House in Palm Springs, constructed in 1937 for a St. Louis socialite who wanted a house and studio for teaching Mensendieck postural exercises. Professor Stephen Leet’s 2004 book, *Neutra’s Miller House* documents the process by which the Miller’s desire to accommodate the Mensendieck System into the design of this desert home was accomplished. Leet also notes that the house won first prize in the House Beautiful Small Homes competition in 1938 and was widely written about in the United States and abroad.⁴²

Soon after completing the Miller House, Neutra designed the John Nicholas Brown house, also known as the Windshield House due to the large expanses of glass. Brown, a descendent of Brown University Founders, sought Neutra to create a luxurious summer retreat on Fisher’s Island, located off the Connecticut coast. Neutra incorporated a prototype of Buckminster Fuller’s experimental, Dymaxion bathroom into this 1938 project. Fuller’s patent for the prefabricated all-metal bathroom was issued two years later. A 2003 award winning book about the “Windshield House” documents the genesis of the design as well as the detailed and extensive discussion between Brown and Neutra about the program and design for the house.⁴³

All four of these residential projects, including the VDL House as well as others, garnered national attention for programmatic and technological innovation and these projects also broke new ground aesthetically; however, Neutra’s impact on the architecture profession in the United States and abroad was not limited to residential architecture. Neutra was chosen along with W.P. Barry, William Lescaze and Wallace Harrison to pull together a special January 1935 issue of the *Architectural Forum* devoted to international school design.⁴⁴ The ideas exhibited in Neutra’s 1925 Ring Plan School design and the research he had conducted leading up to construction of his Corona Avenue School led to Neutra being chosen. The issue that they created featured proposed school designs, as well as photographs of constructed schools in the U.S., Italy, Mexico and the Soviet Union, among many others. Neutra received the lion’s share of the issue with his lavishly illustrated article, *New Elementary Schools of America: The Redesigning of the Basic Unit of Education—The Individual Classroom—As a Necessity*, and a second on his radical “Ring School” scheme (realized almost four decades later as the Richard J. Neutra Elementary School at the Lemoore Naval Air Base, Lemoore, California, built in 1961).⁴⁵

Neutra’s 1935 Corona Avenue School design arguably had a numerically larger societal acceptance and influence than his residential and city planning ideas. It used a low-slung plan with bilateral illumination and outdoor breezeways rather than stairs and hallways. It opened to private instructional gardens and movable seating accommodated the progressive ideas of philosopher-educator John Dewey. The Corona Avenue School implemented the ideas of the unbuilt 1925 Ring Plan School model that was included in the 1932 MOMA exhibition.

Because so many of the functional needs of elementary education are universal, Neutra’s practical solutions could be easily adopted by journeymen architects as they designed projects that were meant to

Chatsworth, California,” *Architectural Forum*, 1936 Oct., v. 65, p. 274275.; “The Josef von Sternberg house, San Fernando Valley, California : architect, Richard J. Neutra,” *Nuestra arquitectura*, 1937 Jan., v. 8, p. 815; Maxwell Levinson, “The architecture of Richard J. Neutra,” *Shelter*, 1938 Mar., v. 3, p. [22]43; “Residence J. von Sternberg, 1935,” *Architecture d’aujourd’hui*, 1946 May/June, v. 16, p. 32.

⁴² Steven Leet, *Richard Neutra’s Miller House* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 159.

⁴³ Dietrich Neumann, *Richard Neutra’s Windshield House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ *Architectural Forum*, v LXII, No. 1, January 1935.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 27-35.

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be useful and not individualistic architectural “statements.” Neutra thought that such predictable functional needs could be economically met by schools that were prefabricated, an approach that was followed in Mexico with some design distinction (see below).

Architectural historian Larry Speck identified the Corona Avenue School as “perhaps the most influential of the early modern school buildings.”⁴⁶ Neutra’s 1937 Emerson Junior High School in Los Angeles also was widely written about and judged by Pulitzer Prize winning art historian, Oliver Larkin to be one of the great achievements of 1930s Modernism, along with Wright’s Fallingwater and the Gropius residence in Lincoln, Massachusetts.⁴⁷

Neutra's projects of the 1920s and '30s received wide recognition, as described above. They occurred at a time when the other pioneers of Modernism—Gropius, Mies, Mendelsohn and Le Corbusier—were constrained by political developments in Europe. Just before and after WWII, Neutra's work was about to assume its final logical development.

Neutra’s Work 1940 -1970 - A Founder of "California Modern"

Architectural historians who, to Neutra’s annoyance, focus on the outward appearance of his work, listed his 1927 Jardinette apartments and his 1929 Lovell “Health” House as some of the earliest American examples of what Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson called the “International Style.” He is also credited with being a founder of what became known as “California Modern.”⁴⁸

Prewar limitations, availability of local materials, building skills and client requests led Neutra to broaden and relax the palette of materials used in the projects of the 1940s and beyond. These post-1930s projects and Neutra’s previous influence on the early careers of Harwell Hamilton Harris, Gregory Ain, Joseph Alan Stein and Raphael Soriano made him, along with Rudolph Schindler, one of the important founders of a less severe version of Modernism. This founding role was recognized in a 1982 Museum of Modern Art retrospective exhibition of Neutra’s work, curated by Arthur Drexler and Thomas Hines, entitled “The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern.”⁴⁹

Hines, who has written extensively about the work of Richard Neutra, stated in the introduction to his 1982 book, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, that:

“Ultimately his [Neutra’s] architecture became as important to California as Wright’s and Sullivan’s had been to the Middle West, and it continued through midcentury to dominate the California scene and to have a worldwide impact. Gregory Ain, Harwell Harris, and Raphael Soriano were among the first of numerous talented architects to work in Neutra’s office or to be influenced by his work before moving on to distinguished careers of their own.”⁵⁰

Edward Killingsworth, one of the young participants in the Case Study Program, said of Neutra's contribution, “Architecture as we know it today would not exist without many of the influences of

⁴⁶ Larry Speck, “Editorial, Schools and Modern Architecture,” *Architype Review* (Summer 2010). <http://archityperereview.com/15-schools/editorials/4-schools-and-modern-architecture>.

⁴⁷ Oliver Larkin, *Art and Life in America* (New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston 1960), 446, quoted in Hines, *Search*, 84.

⁴⁸ Arthur Drexler and Thomas S Hines, *The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982).

⁴⁹ Arthur Drexler and Thomas S. Hines, *The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982).

⁵⁰ Thomas Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, p.6

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Richard Neutra. . .Because of his tenacity, his point of view has become a way of life for all.”⁵¹

One of Neutra’s early explorations in this more relaxed architectural design that was later characterized as “California Modern” occurred at the VDL Research House. In 1940, Neutra designed and constructed the Garden House Wing of the compound to accommodate the birth of his youngest son Raymond. The new wing established the footprint of the VDL Research House that we see today. Neutra used again a garage door that opened one side of a room into a small pocket garden and introduced a mechanical double steel and glass wall that opened the entire side of the living room into the south patio of the complex. This allowed movement, experience and socialization to occur fluidly through indoor and outdoor spaces. The Garden Wing was featured a few years later as “still modern,” on the cover of the *Los Angeles Times* home magazine and also in Entenza’s *Arts and Architecture*.^{52,53}

This evolution in Neutra’s designs continued throughout the 1940s. The small 1942 redwood-clad John Nesbitt house located in Los Angeles, California was designed with an entrance reflecting pond extending under a glass window into the rustic brick paved entrance that also had large wood-frame sliding glass doors that opened to a back garden. The American Institute of Architects cited the project a first place award.⁵⁴

The 1946 Palm Springs winter vacation home that Neutra designed for Edgar Kaufmann, owner of Wright’s Fallingwater house, became his most famous residence. Here he introduced for the first time in North America the vertical sun louvers that Neutra had seen in Brazil and Argentina during his State Department tour of the previous year.⁵⁵ He also introduced for the first time in his work floor-to-ceiling steel sliding glass doors with thin frames with matching floor-to-ceiling fixed plate glass panes. Previously such doors had required a structural panel many inches high (as in the motorized doors of the 1940 Garden House Wing of the Neutra compound). In these earlier projects, he designed adjacent fixed panes with a matching window at stool height to produce a harmonious composition when seen from inside. The new sliding doors, after 1946, made it possible for one entire wall of the house to be of floor-to-ceiling glass.

Neutra used horizontal and vertical planes of sandstone, redwood, glass and aluminum for the Kaufman House in an oasis and desert setting, purposely avoiding the Wrightian idea that the building had organically sprouted from the earth. Recently this house was featured on the front jacket of British architect and historian Kenneth Frampton et al’s book *Modern Masterpieces*.⁵⁶

More than 60 years after its construction, the power of the Kaufmann Desert House is admired. While commenting on the recent total restoration, the architectural critic Paul Goldberger commented:

I had known of Richard Neutra’s Kaufmann House in Palm Springs, California for years but only when I finally stood inside it did I realize how powerful an impact this modernist classic makes and how fully and brilliantly it blurs the distinction between inside and outside. . .Another thing I didn’t anticipate was how important wood and stone are to this house, to achieving the complex

⁵¹ Quoted in Esther McCoy, “Richard Neutra, the Man and His Work,” *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, Feb 11 1968, 15.

⁵² John G. Moore, “Tomorrow’s House, Built 17 Years Ago,” *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine* (July 10, 1943), cover, 20-22.

⁵³ Anonymous, “House of Richard J. Neutra,” *California Arts and Architecture*. 57:11 (December 1940), 24.

⁵⁴ Hines, *Search*, 219.

⁵⁵ Richard Neutra, “Sun Control Devices: A Presentation Based Primarily on Examples Collected in South America,” *Progressive Architecture (Pencil Points)*, 27 (October): 88-91.

⁵⁶ Kenneth Frampton and David Larkin, *American Masterworks: Houses of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* (Rizzoli: New York 2008).

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series of counterpoints that Neutra pulled off here—harmonic juxtapositions of mass, of light, of solid and void, of rough and smooth textures.⁵⁷

The fame of this building was enhanced by a particular dramatic photograph taken with several exposures after sunset, by Julius Shulman, who would become a well-known architectural photographer. Professor Simon Niedenthal has described the several years of struggle between the media savvy Neutra and Edgar Kaufmann with regard to when and where the house was to be published in professional and popular magazines. Shulman's photograph was ultimately published in the April 11, 1949 issue of *Life* and soon took on a life of its own.⁵⁸ This moment in the career of Julius Shulman came several years after Shulman and Neutra had started working together.

Years earlier, Neutra had chanced upon some photographs that Shulman had taken of his brand new 1936 Josef Kun House, located in Los Angeles, California and suggested that Shulman should become his photographer of choice, referring the young man to his former apprentices Rafael Soriano, Gregory Ain and Harwell Harris. Neutra accompanied Shulman on the photo shoots of his own houses, directing which shots to take at which time of day. This was a practice that increasingly grated on Shulman, as his experience and reputation grew.⁵⁹

Niedenthal emphasizes that Neutra and Shulman developed an approach to architectural photography that went beyond a mere documentation of a building for other architects. Photography, they believed, was a way of catching a moment of special weather or lighting, an alignment of design features and a staging of furniture and people so that the image itself was evocative in a way that was similar to a celebrity photograph. Neutra wrote about architectural photography both in his introduction to Shulman's book on architectural photography and in magazine articles.⁶⁰ In a review article in 1968, Esther McCoy commented that Neutra pioneered the practice of submitting a package of these staged photographs with attendant text and captions to the delight of magazine editors.⁶¹

The Kaufmann Desert House photograph and Shulman's other now-iconic black and white photographs would become nearly synonymous with the aesthetic of the American Modernist architects of the 1930s through the 1960s whose projects he photographed. The existence of Shulman's extensive body of work was rediscovered toward the end of his long life (he died in his 98th year). The collection now resides at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

One year after completing the Kaufmann Desert House, and before the *Life* magazine publication, Neutra designed the 1947 Case Study House #20 for Dr. Stuart Bailey. Within the parameters of limited square footage and low cost, Neutra introduced again the large floor-to-ceiling steel sliding glass doors and used economically-available stucco and redwood. He also included a prefabricated Ingersoll utility core that provided electricity and water to both the kitchen and bathroom; however, the primary innovation was implementation of a "four courter plan" which he had introduced in his 1946 Kaufmann house. Neutra and his 18-year-old son Dion had written about this concept some years earlier. The parti created four functionally separate outdoor areas: one for the entrance, one for the living room, one for

⁵⁷ Paul Goldberger, "The Modernist Manifesto: why buildings from our recent past are in peril and why saving them is so crucial," *Preservation*, May/June 2008, 31.

⁵⁸ Simon Niedenthal, "Glamorized Houses: Neutra, Photography and the Kaufmann House," *Journal of Architectural Education* 47 No. 2 (1993): 101-112.

⁶⁰ Raymond Neutra, "Remembering Julius Shulman," *DWELL* (November 2009): 26.

⁶¹ Julius Shulman, *Photographing Architecture and Interiors* (New York: Whitney Library of Design 1962), vi-ix. Richard Neutra, "Photographer and Architect," *Camera* 42, no. 5 (May 1963): 8-31.

⁶² Esther McCoy, "The Man and His Work," *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, Feb 11, 1968, 42.

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bedrooms and one a utility court.⁶²

In 1948, Neutra designed the Tremaine House. To reduce the risk of forest fire spreading to the Tremaine House, Neutra used a reinforced-concrete post and beam system that he had developed for a school in Puerto Rico. The house opened with great sweeping overhangs into a grove of live oaks in Montecito, California. A 1951 critique of the house in *Interiors* magazine included a good characterization of Neutra's work at this point:

Because he has refused to turn his back on either the naturalistic vocabulary of Wright or the international school, Neutra's style has become an ever developing personal eclecticism always consistent, yet full of surprises and nuances.⁶³

Neutra's Influence Abroad

During this prolific period when Neutra was designing projects in Southern California, his work was becoming influential all over the United States and as far as Europe and South America. In 1942, economist, former Franklin Roosevelt advisor and then governor of Puerto Rico, Rexford Tugwell invited Neutra to serve as consultant to the Committee for the Design of Public Works on the island. Neutra's 1941 neighborhood and housing planning at Avion Village near Dallas, Texas, his 1942 Channel Heights housing project for dock workers in San Pedro, California, and his stints as chairman of the California Planning Commission and consultant to the National Youth Progress Administration in the late 1930s had brought him to Tugwell's attention.⁶⁴

The Puerto Rico assignment resulted in designs for reinforced-concrete schools with the use of garage doors opening to outside gardens, as had been earlier demonstrated at the Neutra VDL compound. The assignment also included health centers, hospitals and associated housing, all configured as part of a hierarchical regional system to be constructed as soon as WWII was over. The frequent earthquakes and hurricanes on the island and the local ability to produce cement made this a natural technology to apply. Neutra developed there an integrated post, beam and slab approach that, later used for schools in Guam, for a large villa in Havana, Cuba, and, as mentioned above, was used in his 1948 Tremaine House in Montecito, California. Neutra approached the opportunity in Puerto Rico as he had other projects, responding to programmatic needs, available materials and local conditions, drawing on previously implemented and demonstrated features, while developing new approaches that would inform future projects, his own and beyond.

Professor Brett Tippey of Kent State University has argued that Neutra's focus on the role of the natural site, climate-sensitive design and the clients' overall well-being became a major influence for Spanish architects as they emerged from isolation after WWII. Neutra's approach helped them find a third way, between historic imitation and the extreme rationalism of 1930s European Modernism.⁶⁵ Interest in Neutra's work was clearly evident in post-war Spain. Thirty-eight articles by or about Richard Neutra appeared in the journal published by the Instituto Eduardo Torroja in Spain between 1951 and 1967.⁶⁶ In addition, in 1968 the Institute published a book of Neutra's writings with photographs of selected early

⁶² Barbara Lamprecht, *Richard Neutra* (Cologne: Taschen, 2000), 193.

⁶³ Anonymous, "Urbanity in the Wooded Foothills," *Interiors* III (Oct 1951): 81 (quoted in Hines, *Search*, 232).

⁶⁴ Hines, *Search*, 214.

⁶⁵ Brett Tippey, "Genuine Invariants: The Origins of Modernism in 20th Century Spain," *Architectural History* (vol. 56), 2013, 14.

⁶⁶ For example, according to data provided by Professor Ignacio Oteiza by email on February 4, 2013 to Raymond Neutra.

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and later works.⁶⁷

A similar following was present in Germany as well. According to German Professor and architectural historian, Joaquin Medina Warmburg, post-World War II German architects turned their backs on the monumental and "volkish" architecture of the Third Reich, finding in Neutra and the humane modern architecture of the California Case Study Program a model for emulation. These works were extensively covered in the German magazine *Bauen + Wohnen*.

In 1945, the U.S. State Department sent Neutra on a goodwill tour throughout South America to discuss his special brand of American architecture. This resulted in the publication in Brazil of Neutra's 1948 book, *Architecture of Social Concern*, in Portuguese and English. Oscar Niemeyer's mentor and pioneer Modernist Gregory Warchavchik wrote in the Introduction:

In his experimental public school for Los Angeles, Neutra has served children of his city. . . but by no means only them. For the first time and against all conventional opposition of that period, Neutra endeavored to create a flexible combination indoor-outdoor working stage for learning by a variety of doing. . . In 1945, we in Brazil had occasion to meet Richard Neutra in person, who then was sent to us by the United States Department of State. If his influence on us had been great before, the impression of his spoken word and his living personality deepened it very much.⁶⁸

Recent research by Abilio Guerra and Fernanda Critelli de Campos in the online Brazilian journal *Vitruvius* has identified 58 articles by or about Richard Neutra in Brazil, published between 1945 and 1967, documenting a definite influence, particularly on Sao Paulo architects.⁶⁹

Knowledge of Neutra's work and his significance would expand beyond the profession before the end of the decade. On August 15, 1949, Neutra was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine for an issue that dealt with modern trends in housing in the postwar period. Neutra's national significance was summed up there as follows:

But southern California is also the stomping ground of one of the world's best and most influential moderns. . . Vienna-born Richard Neutra has gone a long way toward making the place one of the hotbeds of the U.S. modern. . . . By the 1940s, he had come into his own as one of the world's half-dozen top modern architects. . . He objects to the old "machine for living" slogan. "I try to make a house like a flower pot, in which you can root something and out of which family life will bloom," he tells his clients. . .⁷⁰

The following year, Swiss architect Willi Boesiger approached Neutra to begin a comprehensive publication of his work, including an essay on Neutra by the architectural historian Siegfried Gideon. In the introduction, Boesiger wrote:

When 22 years ago publisher Girsberger, my friend [Oskar] Stonorov and I undertook to bring the work of Le Corbusier before the public, we did so with the conviction of owing this to the world. In the summer of 1950, I visited Neutra in California and saw a number of his works. I was so impressed by his thinking and creating that I returned to Europe with the desire to collect

⁶⁷ Fernando Cassinello, ed., *RJ Neutra*, (Madrid: Instituto Eduardo Torroja, 1968).

⁶⁸ Richard Neutra, *Architecture of Social Concern* (Sao Paolo: Todtmann, 1948), 34.

⁶⁹ <http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/qrquitextos/14.159/4837>

⁷⁰ Anonymous, "New Shells," *Time Magazine*, LIV, No. 7 (August 15 1949): 58-65.

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the work of this great contemporary in a book and bring it closer to a wide audience. Once again, I found in Girsberger an enthusiastic collaborator.

It was in the year 1927 [*sic*] in the studio of the architect Lurcat on the rue Bonaparte, Paris, that I saw for the first time pictures of the Health House of Neutra. We followers of the new architecture were astounded and admired this revolutionary new building.⁷¹

The Boesiger series was destined to continue through two more volumes, covering Neutra's work through the 1960s, including the 1966 Phase III construction at the Neutra VDL compound.⁷²

Robert Alexander Partnership (1949 -1958)

Two hundred, forty-one projects are attributed to Neutra between 1940 and his death in 1970.⁷³ During eight years of this thirty-year period 1949-1958, Neutra was in a partnership with Robert Alexander. Neutra had formed the partnership with Alexander to pursue commercial projects. Work through this partnership included a city plan for Sacramento, California and a large Los Angeles public housing project, ultimately not built on the complaint that it represented "creeping socialism."

Over the eight years of the partnership, theories of town planning were directed instead to several large military bases including one in Le Moore, California, where Neutra's idea of a Ring Plan School was finally constructed. The firm also designed schools and the Governor's mansion in Guam, the United States Embassy in Karachi, and visitors' centers at Painted Desert in Petrified Forest National Park and the Gettysburg National Military Park, several other schools, libraries, auditoria, university campuses and several churches. Close to the end of the partnership, Neutra assumed a particularly important role in the design of the Los Angeles Hall of Records, with varying north, east, west and south approaches to sun control, including its enormous multi-story "electric eye" driven sun louvers on the southern side of the building. The company that constructed these louvers also provided them for the 1966 Richard and Dion Neutra Phase III VDL design.⁷⁴

During the Alexander partnership, the smaller Neutra VDL compound office continued and there they designed a number of distinguished residences. After the dissolution of the Neutra-Alexander partnership, all Neutra architectural projects were executed from the VDL Research House studio office including nonresidential buildings such as the court house in Orange County, several award-winning medical office buildings and two housing developments in Germany. One unusual project was a "drive-in" church for the televangelist Robert Schuller, for whom Philip Johnson would later (1981) design his adjacent "Crystal Cathedral." Using the careful system of documentation that characterized the development of plans at that office, it was possible with the help of supervising architects to build a number of large luxurious residences on the East Coast of the USA, in Cuba, Venezuela, Switzerland, France and Germany.⁷⁵

After the 1963 fire at the Neutra compound, the Neutra design team moved to an office on Glendale Blvd., where an important project was rebuilding the upper stories of the original VDL Wing. Richard

⁷¹ Willi Boesiger, ed., *Richard Neutra, Buildings and Projects* (Zurich: Girsberger Verlag, 1950), 7. (The Lovell House is actually dated 1929.)

⁷² Willi Boesiger, ed., *Richard Neutra, 1950-1960, Buildings and Projects* (New York: Praeger, 1959). Willi Boesiger, ed., *Richard Neutra 1960-1966, Buildings and Projects* (New York: Praeger, 1967).

⁷³ Hines, *Search*, 335-337.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 245-329.

⁷⁵ Raymond Neutra, personal communication, March 12, 2013.

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Neutra was importantly involved in this design process and in the same team approach that characterized all but his very earliest works. A month or so after the March 21, 1963 fire, Neutra began working with members of his small long-term team of collaborators on preliminary designs for rebuilding the upper stories. At the same time, he urged his son Dion, who a few years before had struck out on his own, to rejoin the firm. Neutra was traveling abroad that summer and on August 20, 1963 sent back annotations on preliminary drawings that show the reconstructed wing as it was ultimately constructed. It is not clear whether he drew all of it but some details are clearly in his hand and in a note on the drawing (see below), he asks that “my drawings” be shown by his team “also” to his son Dion.⁷⁶

It is clear from the August 1963 drawings, that Neutra and his design team had already decided that they would apply many of the 1932 design solutions to the design issues that had confronted Neutra in the original VDL building. Here, again, he wanted to facilitate a comfortable interior climate through design. As with the 1932 phase, he wanted to avoid the constraints of historical reference and to deploy appropriate new materials and technologies, so that he and his son could further these design goals without the conspicuous consumption of space, expensive materials or expensive craftsmanship. Richard Neutra’s 1932 *answers* to these design issues were retained and amplified as he and his son also now partner Dion, moved forward with his much extolled commitment to team work in the rebuilding of the VDL Wing. Later in 1963, Neutra asked Dion to assume the role of project architect.

As described in more detail in the description section of this document, the floor plans, the use of a rooftop garden, the fenestration to capture distant landscapes, while screening out neighbors, strategies for controlling the sun and capturing breezes, were all retained and improved upon. Some changes in function and thirty years of practical experience and scientific reading as well as changes in professional achievement informed the modifications to the original plan.

The space previously used for the design studio was repurposed as a place for discussions, musical performances and conferences for the newly created Richard J. Neutra Foundation, which sought to promote evidence-based design. Shallow reflection pools were added to each level of the building, including the roof. Each of the bedrooms now had access to outside balconies. Dion obtained the donation of movable vertical sun louvers for part of the west side of the building. He accommodated his mother’s desire for a screened porch by extending the second floor kitchen and dining nook eastward and allowing a large sliding glass door to slide southward on a special track, leaving a large screened opening when desired. He suggested a bridge and spiral staircase for the rear exit from the third floor kitchen. He conducted all negotiations regarding insurance and the building department, which allowed the use of the existing prefabricated foundation, basement and original building height, all of which violated more recent building regulations. As construction progressed, Dion made important decisions on finishes and technology, such as an elevator with four stops, ending in the penthouse, and an innovative carbon filtration of Los Angeles’s smog-polluted air. This final phase of the Neutra compound was widely written about, including but not limited to articles in the *Architectural Record* in the United States and *Architect and Builder* in South Africa.⁷⁷

Neutra’s crediting Dion for his important contributions to the project not only acknowledged that he was passing on the baton to his son but also was consistent with Neutra’s approach from the earliest time of the practice, when he acknowledged the contributions of Gregory Ain and others. Thomas Hines

⁷⁶ Frederick Koeper, *The Richard and Dion Neutra VDL Research House I and II*, (Pomona: Cal Poly Pomona, 1985): 27.

⁷⁷ Raymond Lifchez, “Five recent houses by Richard Neutra,” *Architectural Record* 143, 5 (May 1968): 173-184. Anonymous, “Richard Neutra’s Research House Re-built,” *Architect and Builder* (South Africa).

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summarized that practice as follows:

Neutra apparently made every effort to acknowledge the contribution of his associates and collaborators. Neutra's "system" as it evolved, borrowed from both the older European atelier idea and the corporate hierarchical organization of the larger turn of the century American architectural empires. His own small office was a miniature of both systems, but theoretically and ideally it included several progressive categories through which aspirants could move: student apprentices who would work for nothing or occasionally pay fees for the privilege of learning through working; assistants who would receive 15 percent from the net income of the jobs on which they worked; and collaborators who would receive 30 percent of the net income on the jobs for which they took primary responsibility . . . Neutra tried to supplement their pay and boost their morale by giving them credit in print whenever they worked on jobs that were published. He was commended for his not altogether customary practice by several journal editors . . .⁷⁸

VDL Research House – The Important Association with the Career and Life of Richard Neutra

From 1932 until his death in 1970, Richard Neutra lived and worked in the VDL Research House. Except for the few pre-1932 and the Alexander partnership projects, all of Neutra's other project design work occurred here; all of his publications were written here; it is where he lived with his wife and children and it is where the cremated remains of Richard and Dione Neutra have been mixed with the soil of the patio garden and memorialized with a plaque .

As intended, the compound housed Neutra's design studio and he used each design phase of this place to demonstrate to clients and the world how he would go about meeting their needs. Neutra believed that the three phases of his VDL Research House illustrated the steady development of his ideas. He expressed this conviction in one of his essays that was posthumously published in 1989:

I was convinced that high-density design could succeed in a fully human way and I saw my new house as a concrete pilot project. I wanted to demonstrate that human beings, brought together in close proximity, can be accommodated in very satisfying circumstances, taking in that precious amenity called privacy. . . I planted three families on my ordinary sixty-by-seventy foot lot, next to Silver Lake. And I was able to arrange things in such a way as to embellish our lives with abundant plantings and bracing vistas. . . there were many options for getting off by oneself--along with many more for group work, socializing and various cultural activities.⁷⁹

Neutra was working on a book devoted to this subject when he died. It too was published posthumously a decade after his death, with a forward by his son Dion.⁸⁰ The VDL Research House better demonstrates these convictions and the evolution of Neutra's interpretation into architectural design than the more well-known projects which did not pose the constraints of money and time.

Early in the history of the property, the unusual design of the VDL Research House attracted potential clients. One of the early ones, Hollywood film editor Leon Barsha, reminisced later to Neutra about the role it played in his selection:

Then one day a friend said she saw an architect's sign on a modern building on Silver Lake Boulevard. Off we went without invitation or appointment. We rang the bell and just said we

⁷⁸ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search*, 199-200.

⁷⁹ Neutra, *Nature Near*, p.81

⁸⁰ Richard Neutra and Dion Neutra: *Bauen und die Sinneswelt* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1980).

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were interested in Modern Architecture. Dione invited us up and you came in and talked with us. When we left, we knew that someday you would design our home.⁸¹

This type of curiosity and interest in the celebrated building, and undoubtedly in its architect, engendered an appealing milieu and venue that attracted a diverse group of the cultural elite. Neutra's wife and executive assistant, Dione, was an accomplished cellist and singer, which helps to explain why composers and musicians made up a large proportion of guests.

The Dione Neutra papers collection at California Polytechnic University at Pomona includes a diary kept by Dione of dinner guests from 1939 to 1963. According to the diary, more than 300 persons of note were dinner guests at the VDL House. One entry notes that on September 10, 1941, the Neutras hosted a reception in honor of the French Painter Fernand Leger. The guests included Man Ray, Isamu Noguchi, the Stravinskys and Countess Tolstoy, among others. Over the years, foreign visitors included architects Alvar Aalto, Jorn Utzon, Siegfried Gideon, Bernard Rudovsky and Enrique Mindlin. American visitors included Serge Chermayeff, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, the Natzlers, Edward and Brett Weston, Emil Ludwig, Grant Wood, Chet Huntley, Victor Gruen, Robert Hutchins, Lazlo Moholy Nagy, Josef von Sternberg, John Nicholas Brown, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Linus Pauling, Charles and Ray Eames, composer Ernst Toch and editors Norman Cousins, Carey McWilliams and John Entenza, all of whom made seminal contributions to cultural life in the United States. In the early years, Neutra's mentor Frank Lloyd Wright visited on several occasions.⁸²

As long term studio, demonstration house, cultural salon and home where nearly all of Neutra's designs were created, books and articles written, the VDL Research House is directly and significantly associated with Richard Neutra during the period of his national significance.

National Significance Recognized by Neutra's Contemporaries

Throughout his career Neutra's peers acknowledged his tireless pursuit of a deeply rooted and unique approach to design, and they recognized his impact on the field of architectural design. Toward the end of his life, Richard Neutra received an honorary doctorate from UCLA and was awarded the honorary architectural prize from the City of Vienna; he became an Honorary Member of the Academy of Venice, was awarded the German Great Cross of Merit and a Gold Medal from the Cuban Association of Architects. In 1969, The Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., sponsored "The Ideas of Richard and Dion Neutra" exhibit.⁸³

Neutra was nominated for the coveted American Institute of Architects Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement, which was not awarded until seven years after his death. Thomas Hines quotes some of the statements of support for the Neutra nomination in his book, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*. The following excerpt from Hine's publication clearly illustrates the high esteem that Neutra possessed among many of his well-known peers

Kenzo Tange wrote that Neutra was "one of the architects whom I most admire and respect." . . . Gropius called Neutra one of the "leading modern architects since the beginning of the new movement in the early 20s of this century." He recalled visiting Neutra in 1928 in Los Angeles

⁸¹ Leon Barsha, *Letter for Neutra's 60th Birthday*, March 1, 1952, Raymond Neutra Archives, 956 Evelyn Ave., Albany, CA 94706.

⁸² Spread Sheet of visitors prepared for Raymond Neutra under the supervision of Prof. Eileen Wallis, Cal Poly Pomona, 2012, Raymond Neutra archive; also see, Personal Communication to Raymond Neutra, Oral History project of K. Lear, Los Altos, CA, 2008.

⁸³ Dione Neutra, "To Tell the Truth," Oral History UCLA, 429, 433 and 473. <http://archive.org/details/totelltruthorah00neut>; also see, <http://sirir-archives.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?&profile=all&source=~!siarchives&uri=full=3100001~!372581~!0#focus>

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where he “worked as a lonely pioneer designing modern buildings . . . the like[s] of which were then unknown on the West Coast. Against very great odds, he stuck to his new artistic approach and by skill and stamina, he slowly achieved a true breakthrough.” Mies van der Rohe wrote that “the mainstream of today’s architecture is the result of the threads of thought and activity of a handful of men who persevered in their efforts and maintained their ideals.” Neutra’s work, Mies asserted, “over the long span of years has become one of those threads. By his example, he has influenced and taught a generation of architects, for which the profession and the world [are] in his debt.”⁸⁴

The themes of persistence, duration and consistency of Neutra’s efforts shared and conveyed in the comments of Gropius and van der Rohe are highly important to fully understanding the significance of Neutra’s impact on architectural design and the built environment. Neutra was not the only one in the 1920s who was committed to the application of efficient industrial methods to architecture of social concern. Several architects along with Neutra who were featured in Hitchcock and Johnson’s 1932 book *The International Style* shared Neutra’s commitments.⁸⁵

While Neutra was not alone in these early concerns, he continued to write about architectural phenomenology, followed advances in brain science and tried to apply all this to his practical work over many decades. This also set him apart. Through this continued and evolving interest he made himself a standard bearer for a results-oriented architecture that harnessed technology for the common good.

Throughout his life, Neutra was trying to change the consciousness of his colleagues and the general public about the importance of the man-made environment. In the midst of a busy practice and with no academic position, year after year, Neutra tirelessly continued lecturing, writing magazine articles for architects and for the general public, writing books, inserting design ideas and images into the advertisements of his suppliers, publishing striking photographs of his works as illustrations of his programmatic ideas, and in every way possible preached and practiced his gospel. This even extended to giving volunteer evening lectures to low-income tenants of public housing communities he had designed in Los Angeles.⁸⁶ In this activity, he may have been influenced by his family contacts with the Viennese Socialist Party,⁸⁷ whose leader, Dr. Viktor Adler, famously claimed: “The revolution of consciousness must progress along with the revolution in economics.”⁸⁸

Neutra continued to write in his residence during the 1950s and 1960s. Dietrich Neumann lists 207 magazine articles written by Neutra in English and German, as well as written by him but translated into French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese.⁸⁹ Neutra also published twelve books over his lifetime, not counting foreign translations in German, Russian, Italian, Spanish and Japanese.⁹⁰ The last

⁸⁴ Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search*, 327-328.

⁸⁵ James Ford and Katherine Morrow Ford, *The Modern House in America* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1940).

⁸⁶ Frank Wilkinson, video interview with Raymond Neutra, March 1999, Raymond Neutra Archive, 956 Evelyn Avenue, Albany, CA.

⁸⁷ Neutra, *Life and Shape*, 41, 51-52.

⁸⁸ Frederic Morton, *Thunder at Twilight* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons 1989), 197.

⁸⁹ Dietrich Neumann, *op. cit.* 130-138.

⁹⁰ Richard Neutra, *Wie Baut Amerika*; also see Richard Neutra, *Amerika*; also see Richard Neutra, *Architecture of Social Concern*; also see, Richard Neutra, *Mysteries*; also see, Richard Neutra, *Survival*; also see, Richard Neutra, *Life and Human Habitat. Mensch und Wonen* (Stuttgart: A. Koch, 1956); also see, Richard Neutra, *Life and Shape*; also see, Richard Neutra, *World and Dwelling* (New York: Universe Books, 1962); also see, Richard Neutra, *Building with Nature (Naturnahes bauen)* (New York: Universe Books, 1971); also see Richard Neutra, *Pflanzen Wasser Steine Licht* (Berlin: Parey Verlag, 1974); also see, Richard Neutra and Dion Neutra, *Bauen und die Sinneswelt*; also see, Richard Neutra and William Marlin, eds. *Nature Near* (Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press,

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of these, *Nature Near*, appeared posthumously in 1989. In it, the writer William Marlin lovingly edited unpublished essays by Neutra that extended his phenomenological and neuroscience speculations.⁹¹

Richard Neutra's Legacy

While Neutra's approach to architectural design was deeply rooted in a psychological and physiological understanding of how people experience the built environment and in a desire to design humane and healthful places; his work also had a long lasting and far reaching impact on architectural aesthetics. The innate sense of proportion and sensitivity to the surrounding natural landscape permeated the way that he assembled the horizontal and vertical planes of his buildings, while using the standardized details and specifications for his kit of parts. He speculated that the serenity induced in him by these strong horizontals and clear verticals might relate to the fact that our inner ear sense of balance has three axes, all at right angles to each other.⁹²

As more contemporary critiques from Henry-Russell Hitchcock to Thomas Hines have recognized, this "look" bore the traces of Frank Lloyd Wright's influence, as well as the ornament-free commitments of Adolph Loos. The striking effects of his skill in the artwork of his architectural renderings and his personal supervision of his architectural photographers contributed to the wide publication of his work. One sees his influence in the Eichler Homes and in schools and buildings all over the world. Hines quotes a January 22, 1967 letter to Neutra from the anthropologist, playwright and screen-writer Robert Ardrey that demonstrates this point:

There is probably no city in the world where the influence of your work and your ideas cannot be read in stone and stucco, realized by men you never met. This is the genuine immortality, when what a man has done so thoroughly imbues his time that it takes on a kind of anonymity. Like a sperm in a gene-pool, nobody quite remembers who was the donor, but there it is, a portion of a population's resource forever. Your concepts of living have in many ways been that. I can remember times in Los Angeles in the '30s when there was only one man, Richard Neutra, and you said "That's a Neutra house." Nobody else could have built it. And then later you looked at a house and you said: "Look at the Neutra influence." But then later on, unless you were a Neutra fan and connoisseur you wouldn't say it because your concepts had spread so widely and deeply into domestic architecture that they had become part of the modern way of life.⁹³

After his death in 1970 and a period of eclipse in the United States during an enthusiasm for post Modernism, Neutra's work slowly gained a renewed appreciation. In 1982 a Museum of Modern Art exhibition was presented, entitled "Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern." This also was the year Thomas Hines published his book *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*.⁹⁴ Since then, there have been eighteen books or theses written about Neutra (see bibliography). A major exhibition of Neutra's drawings was presented at UCLA in 1992, the centenary of his birth and then again at the Los Angeles County Library in 2010. An exhibition of Neutra's European works was presented in Herford, Germany, and later in Basel and Frankfurt in 2010 and 2011.⁹⁵ In recent years, a documentary DVD and an mobile application have been developed for the

1989).

⁹¹ Richard Neutra, William Marlin, ed. *Nature Near: Late Essays of Richard Neutra* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1989).

⁹² Richard Neutra, William Marlin, eds. *Nature Near: Late Essays of Richard Neutra* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1989), 105.

⁹³ Hines, *Search*, 327.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 328.

⁹⁵ Klaus Leuschel, *Richard Neutra in Europe* (Heford:Dumont-Marta: 2010).

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Neutra VDL compound.⁹⁶

Summary Statement

The Neutra VDL Studio and Residences in Los Angeles was placed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places in 2009 at the national level of significance. The VDL Research House warrants National Historic Landmark designation under NHL Criterion 2, because it is importantly associated with the life and career of nationally significant Modernist architect Richard J. Neutra. From 1932 – 1970, Richard Neutra lived here with his family and worked here. During this period of significance, nearly all of his 300 built projects were designed here and his 12 books and hundreds of articles were written here.

Originally funded by a loan from Dutch industrialist Kees van der Leeuw (hence “VDL”), it is located in Los Angeles, California, and is a multi-household live-work space on a 60 x 70-foot lot. It is comprised of the important surviving portions of the 1932 phase, the intact 1940 phase and the intact 1966 Richard and Dion Neutra construction phase. There is a high degree of integrity to the period of significance.

Neutra used each stage of construction to illustrate his architectural goals and the means he advocated for attaining them. This was achieved during visits of prospective clients and through publications for colleagues and the general public. He and his wife used the unusual space to network with potential clients and leading figures of the Modernist movement. In the process, they created a cultural salon. The Neutras’ ashes are scattered in the garden of its patio. All of these facts demonstrate that this place is importantly associated with Neutra’s work.

Richard J. Neutra (1892-1970) was an architect who was of national and international historic significance. Starting in the 1920s and '30s, he was a pioneer promoter and practitioner of an "International Style" architecture that he claimed to be uniquely possible in America. This architecture assembled off-the-shelf technology to create housing, schools and health facilities geared toward the health and well-being of the inhabitants. Neutra emphasized the importance of linking these technological structures and their functions to the site and to nature. Through a series of innovative works starting in the 1940s and through an apprentice system that he established at this studio, he influenced many young architects, four of whom went on to head academic departments of architecture. Neutra helped shape mid-century modern architecture in the United States and elsewhere. This made him one of the founders of "California Modern," which led to national and international recognition. With his young protégé, photographer Julius Shulman, he influenced the way modern architecture was presented in the media. His extensive writings on architectural phenomenology and the potential of neuroscience for good design anticipated the current interest in these topics. Because of all these accomplishments and his influences, particularly as related to school, residential and neighborhood planning, he was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1949 and received a posthumous AIA Gold Medal in 1972 among many other honors in the United States and abroad. He was viewed as an important representative of an American brand of Modernism. These facts support his national historic significance.

Even more than the designated Landmark studios of Fredrick Law Olmsted in Brookline, Massachusetts, and Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park Illinois, which are not illustrative of all phases of those masters’ works, the Neutra VDL Studio and Residences is the best place to interpret Neutra's career. The

⁹⁶ Timothy Sakamoto, *VDL Research House: Richard Neutra’s Studio and Residence* (Pomona: Cal Poly Pomona Ind-Press Productions, 2007). Sarah Lorenzen and David Hartwell: *Neutra VDL Studio and Residences* (Los Angeles: Plasmatic Concepts, 2012). <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/neutra-vdl-studio-residences/id468279435?ls=1&mt=8>.

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building was consciously designed by Neutra in each of its successive phases to illustrate how his goals for health and welfare and for linking with nature could still be achieved at low cost, on a small urban footprint and with appropriate technology, hurdles that did not need to be surmounted in some of his more famous and expensive projects. Furthermore, unlike any other of Neutra's works, this one allows the visitor to see the evolution of the work of the Neutra firm from 1932 through 1940 and 1966 all in one place. Architectural students from California Polytechnic University at Pomona, which now owns this property, regularly conduct tours and present these ideas to the public as well as how Neutra's ideas influenced mid-twentieth century Modernism in the United States and abroad.

In 1982, Professor Frederick Koeper of Cal Poly Pomona quoted Harwell Hamilton Harris in summing up the importance of Neutra and of the Neutra VDL compound, in this way:

Neutra anticipated technology's effect on society and he proclaimed architecture's role in enabling man to survive technology. What he saw, he said both in buildings and in words. Neutra's most important book, *Survival Through Design*, gives us his theory, [while] the VDL Research House gives us his example.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Frederick Koeper, *op. cit.*, 31.

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register.
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository): Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, UCLA Research Library, 53442 Charles Young Research Library, Los Angeles, CA 90095

Dione Neutra Papers, Cal Poly Pomona College of Environmental Design, 3801 W. Temple Ave.,
Pomona, CA 91768

Raymond Neutra Archive, 956 Evelyn Avenue, Albany, CA 94706

NEUTRA STUDIO AND RESIDENCES

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than an acre (60 feet by 70 feet)

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

Latitude: 34.09842681884766

Longitude: -118.26041412353516

Verbal Boundary Description: The Neutra Studio and Residences lie between Silver Lake Blvd. and Edgewater Terrace. The main wing of VDL has its entrance at 2300 Silver Lake Blvd, and the 1940 Garden House wing has its entrance at 2351 Edgewater Terrace. The boundary corresponds with the original property lines.

Assessor's ID: 5439 004 011 14 000 94

Tract # 4140

Lot 27

Boundary Justification:

The current boundaries correspond to those of the original 1931 purchase by the Neutra family.

NEUTRA STUDIO AND RESIDENCES

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Dr. Raymond Richard Neutra MD, Ph.D., based on National Registration by Lauren Weiss Bricker

Address: 956 Evelyn Avenue, Albany, CA 94706

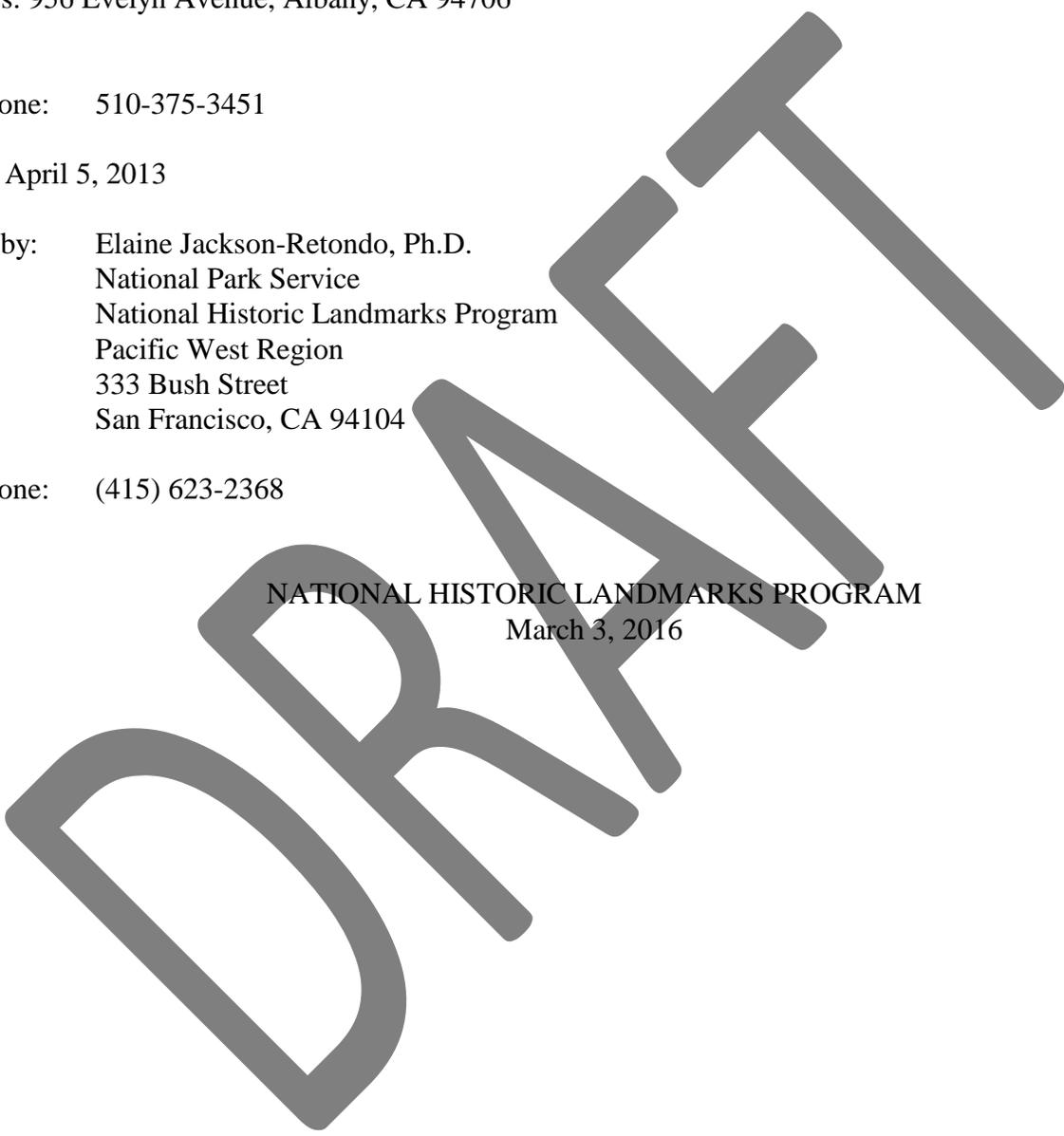
Telephone: 510-375-3451

Date: April 5, 2013

Edited by: Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Ph.D.
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
Pacific West Region
333 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94104

Telephone: (415) 623-2368

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM
March 3, 2016



PROPERTY NAME

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West face of VDL main wing of Neutra compound looking due East. (Photo#0011)

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West face of VDL main wing of Neutra compound looking Northeast.(Photo#0012)

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West face of VDL main wing of Neutra compound, looking due East. Detail of 1932 entry bridge and transparent front door and adjacent windows of 1966 phase of Neutra compound. . (Photo#0013)

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View of North corner of Penthouse and deck of VDL main wing looking Southwest. . (Photo#0006)

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View of South wall of main floor meeting room with Neutra piano,. The camera is looking due South. . (Photo#0014)

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View of North wall, and enlarging mirror of south-most guest bedroom of main floor of 1966 VDL main wing. Looking Northwest. . (Photo#0015)

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View across the living room towards its North wall. The window heights have been designed to capture distant views of the mountains while screening out adjacent roofs. . (Photo#0019)

PROPERTY NAME

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View from living room toward the East showing second floor exit to bridge and spiral staircase leading to North patio. . (Photo#0017)

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View toward northern part of the East wall of the living room and the pass-through to the kitchen beyond.
Looking due East. . (Photo#0018)

PROPERTY NAME

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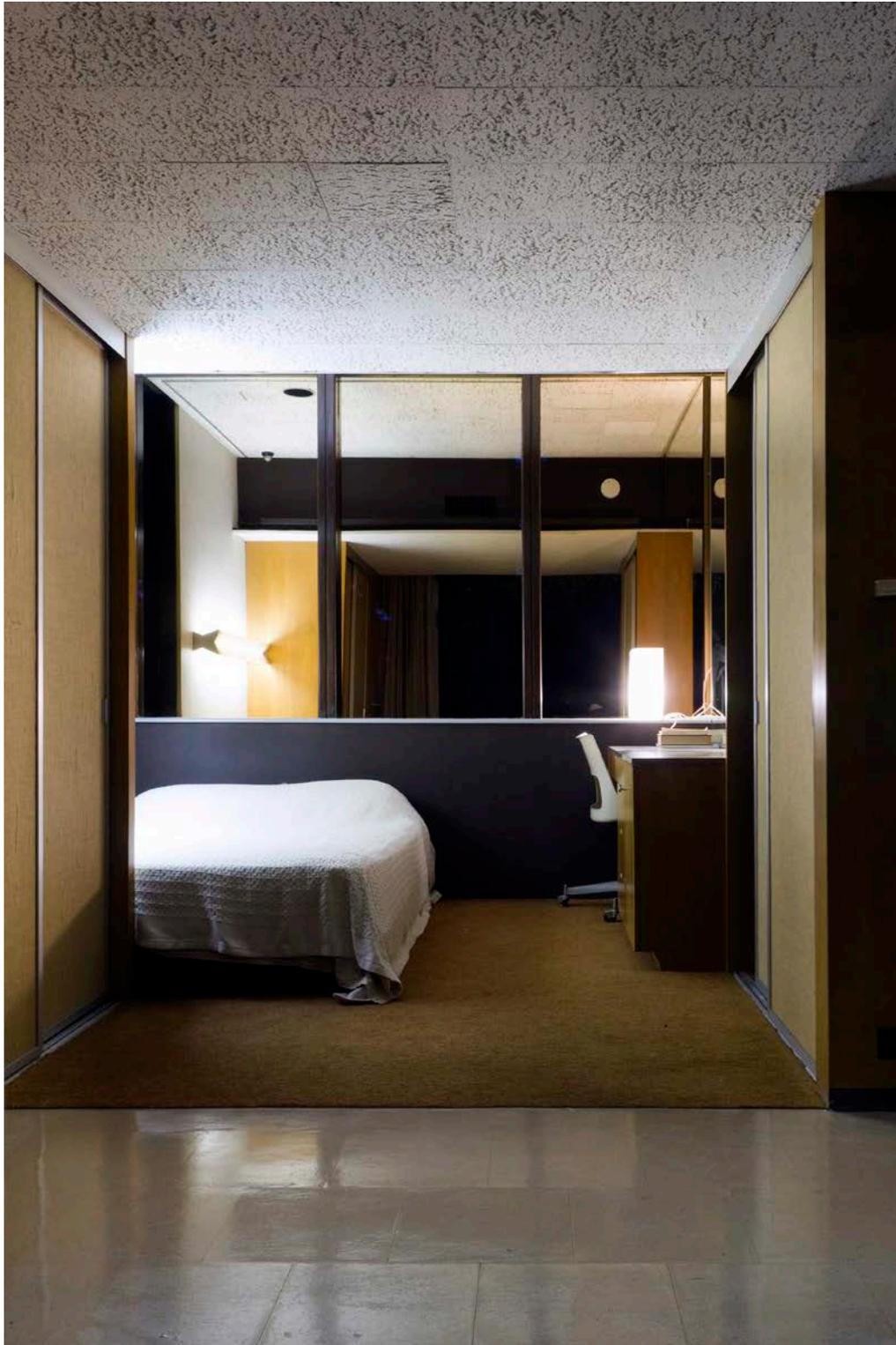
View from the second floor hall of the VDL main wing, looking North toward the kitchen. . (Photo#0023)

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View of West wall of Mr. Neutra's bedroom, looking from the East balcony at night. . (Photo#0025)

PROPERTY NAME

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View across living room through South sliding glass doors toward porch, its reflection pool and sun louvers beyond. Looking due South. . (Photo#0021)

PROPERTY NAME

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View of East face of main wing, from south patio, looking northwest. Note the 1940 built in curving concrete bench. .
(Photo#0036)

PROPERTY NAME

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View of East face of the VDL main wing that faces the south patio looking Southwest. . (Photo#0008)

PROPERTY NAME

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View of North corner of Penthouse, deck and roof reflection pool of VDL main wing looking due South. . (Photo#0007)

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View through the North window of the Penthouse of the VDL main wing looking South. This demonstrates the purposeful use of reflections and transparency typical of this wing. . (Photo#0010)

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View looking westward across the north patio at the bottom level of the East face of the VDL main wing showing the door into the "apprentices' room." . (Photo#0041)

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East face of the Garden House wing of the Neutra compound, looking toward the West from Edgewater Terrace. Note transparent entrance door to Edgewater Terrace and the hedge that creates a pocket garden along the northern part of the East face of that wing. . (Photo#0028)

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View from South patio toward western glass door face of the 1940 Garden House wing.
Looking Southeast. Note strip lighting on underside of overhang. . (Photo#0029)

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View toward South wall of living room of the 1940 Garden Wing. . (Photo#0030)

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View of West wall of Garden House kitchen. (Photo#0032)

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View of East wall of Garden House bedroom looking through frosted glass sliding doors and the silhouette of foliage from hedge that separates pocket garden from Edgewater Terrace. The camera is looking due East. . (Photo#0033)

Photograph Log for Neutra Studio and Residences

Name of Property: Neutra Studio and Residences
City: Los Angeles
County: Los Angeles
State: California
Name of Photographer: David Hartwell
Date of Photographs: July 2012
Location of Orig. Dig. Files: 2351 Edgewater Terrace, Los Angeles CA 90039
Number of Photographs: 42

Photo #0001

View of West and South faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking northeast. Due to intended extensive vegetation, this scale model is the best way to understand how the parts of the Neutra VDL compound relate to each other.

Photo #0002

View of South and East faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking northwest showing south patio.

Photo #0003

View of North and West faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking southeast, showing north patio and sloping terrain of property.

Photo #0004

View of North and East faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking Southwest.

Photo # 0005

View of South and East faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking Northwest, but closer to ground level than photo #002

Photo #0006

View of North corner of Penthouse and deck of VDL II wing looking Southwest.

Photo #0007

View of North corner of Penthouse, deck and roof reflection pool of VDL II wing looking due South.

Photo #0008

View of East face of the VDL II wing that faces the south patio looking Southwest.

Photo #0009

View from South patio to the entrance into the main floor of the VDLII wing, looking Northwest.

Photo #0010

View through the North window of the Penthouse of the VDLII wing looking South. This demonstrates the purposeful use of reflections and transparency typical of this wing.

Photo #0011

West face of VDL II wing of Neutra compound looking due East.

Photo #0012

West face of VDL II wing of Neutra compound looking Northeast.

Photo #0013

West face of VDLII wing of Neutra compound, looking due East. Detail of 1932 entry bridge and transparent front door and adjacent windows of 1966 phase of Neutra compound.

Photo #0014

View of South wall of main floor meeting room with Neutra piano,. The camera is looking due South.

Photo #0015

View of North wall, and enlarging mirror of south-most guest bedroom of main floor of 1966 VDL II wing. Looking Northwest.

Photo #0016

View from second floor kitchen of VDL II wing looking due South along hall that leads to the two Neutra bedrooms and bath. Cabinetry to the right separates this space from open stairwell (not seen). Note varied height of hallway ceiling.

Photo #0017

View from living room toward the East showing second floor exit to bridge and spiral staircase leading to North patio.

Photo #0018

View toward northern part of the East wall of the living room and the pass-through to the kitchen beyond. Looking due East.

Photo #0019

View across the living room towards its North wall. The window heights have been designed to capture distant views of the mountains while screening out adjacent roofs.

Photo #0020

View of East wall and glass southern wall of living room, looking Southeast. Note pass-through to kitchen and sliding glass door to the South porch and stairs to penthouse.

Photo #0021

View across living room through South sliding glass doors toward porch, its reflection pool and sun louvers beyond. Looking due South.

Photo #0022

View across porch and reflection pool toward sun louvers at night. Note strip lighting, first introduced in the 1932 phase of the Neutra compound. The camera is looking due South.

Photo #0023

View from the second floor hall of the VDLII wing, looking North toward the kitchen.

Photo #0024

View of east wall of Mrs. Neutra's bedroom. Like a ship's cabin, built in furniture makes this tiny room feel spacious.

Photo #0025

View of West wall of Mr. Neutra's bedroom, looking from the East balcony at night.

Photo #0026

View of West wall of second floor bathroom, looking from the East. Note sunken bathtub.

Photo #0027

View from North patio toward spiral staircase and the part of the Garden House wing that faces that patio. Looking Southeast.

Photo # 0028

East face of the Garden House wing of the Neutra compound, looking toward the West from Edgewater Terrace. Note transparent entrance door to Edgewater Terrace and the hedge that creates a pocket garden along the northern part of the East face of that wing.

Photo # 0029

View from South patio toward western glass door face of the 1940 Garden House wing. Looking Southeast. Note strip lighting on underside of overhang.

Photo # 0030

View toward South wall of living room of the 1940 Garden Wing.

Photo # 0031

View toward North wall of Garden House living room and mirrored entry alcove that gives out to the right and Edgewater Terrace.

Photo #0032

View of West wall of Garden House kitchen

Photo #0033

View of East wall of Garden House bedroom looking through frosted glass sliding doors and the silhouette of foliage from hedge that separates pocket garden from Edgewater Terrace. The camera is looking due East.

Photo #0034

View of West wall of alcove leading into bathroom and small bedroom in the wing extending westward toward (but not connecting to) VDL II wing.

Photo #0035

View of East and South walls of this alcove, looking Southeast..

Photo #0036

View of East face of VDL II wing, from south patio, looking northwest. Note the 1940 built in curving concrete bench.

Photo #0037

View of spiral staircase and second floor bridge to kitchen. The camera is looking Southwest from roof of the Garden House wing.

Photo #0038

View of spiral staircase, looking to the Northeast from south patio entrance to VDL II wing.

Photo # 0039

View of East face of the lowest level of the VDL II wing. Looking Northwest. This is the remnant of the 1932 VDL I basement level. The gray garage door with a regular door and window inserted dates from the late 1930's.

Photo #0040

The same view, with the garage door open to the north patio.

Photo # 0041

View looking westward across the north patio at the bottom level of the East face of the VDL II wing showing the door into the "apprentices' room."

Photo # 0042

This image not included

Photo # 0043

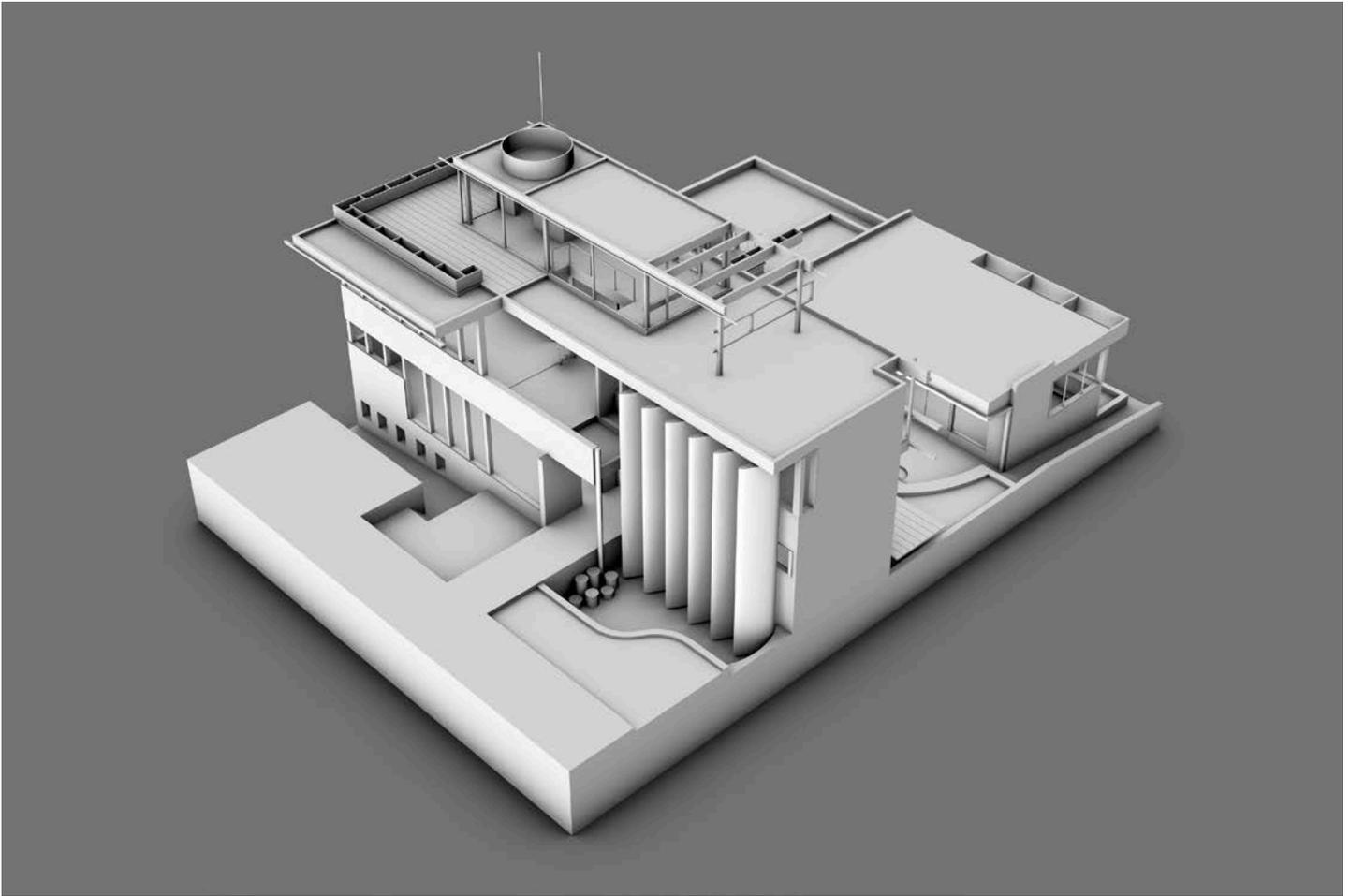
Interior of the "Apprentices" Room." Note the vibrated prefabricated beams upon which the reinforced concrete slab was poured. Also the late 1930's cabinetry. The camera is looking due west.

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Figures and Maps

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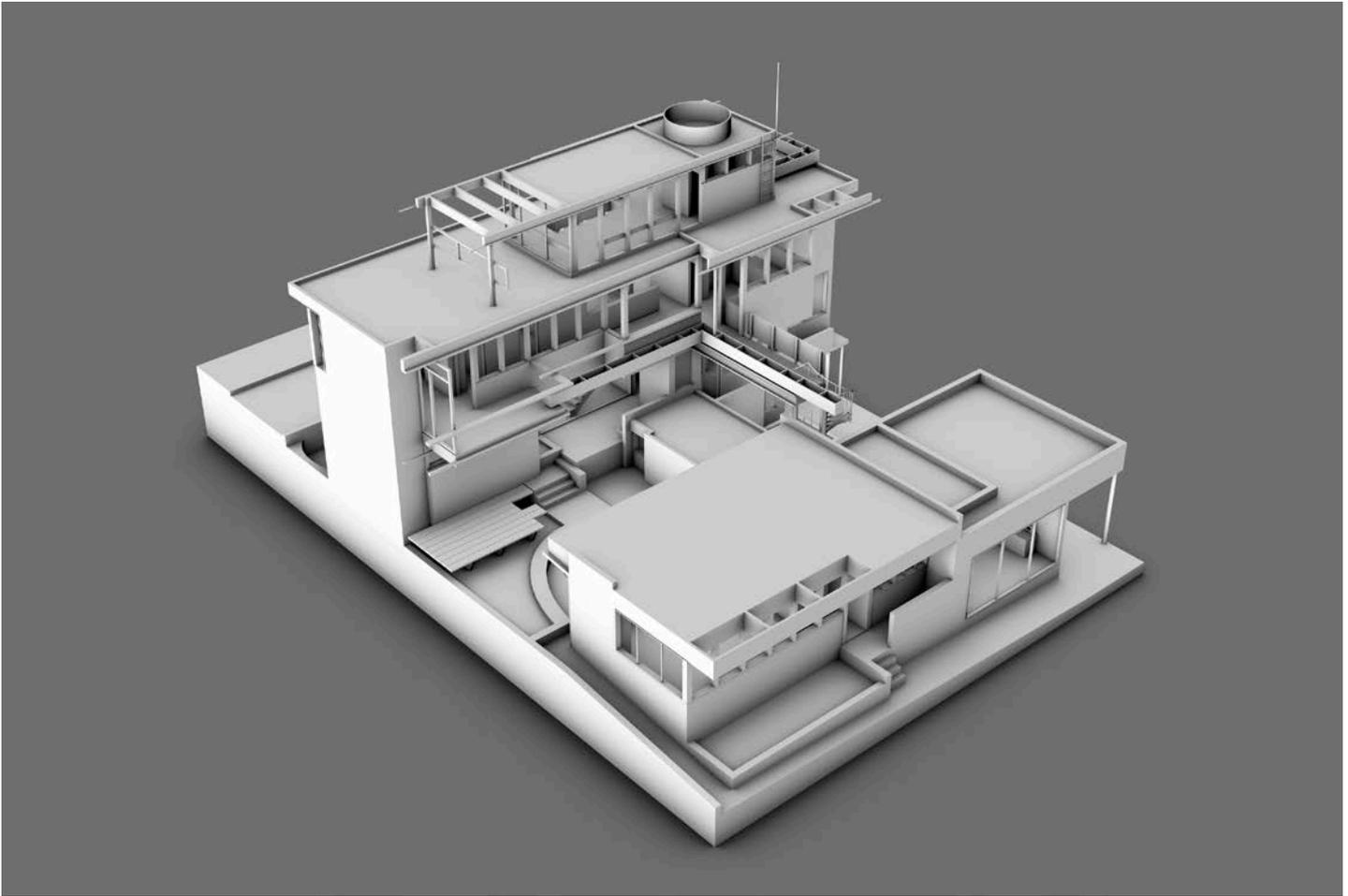
View of West and South faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking northeast. Due to intended extensive vegetation, this scale model is the best way to understand how the parts of the Neutra VDL compound relate to each other.

PROPERTY NAME

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Figures and Maps

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View of South and East faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking northwest showing south patio.

PROPERTY NAME

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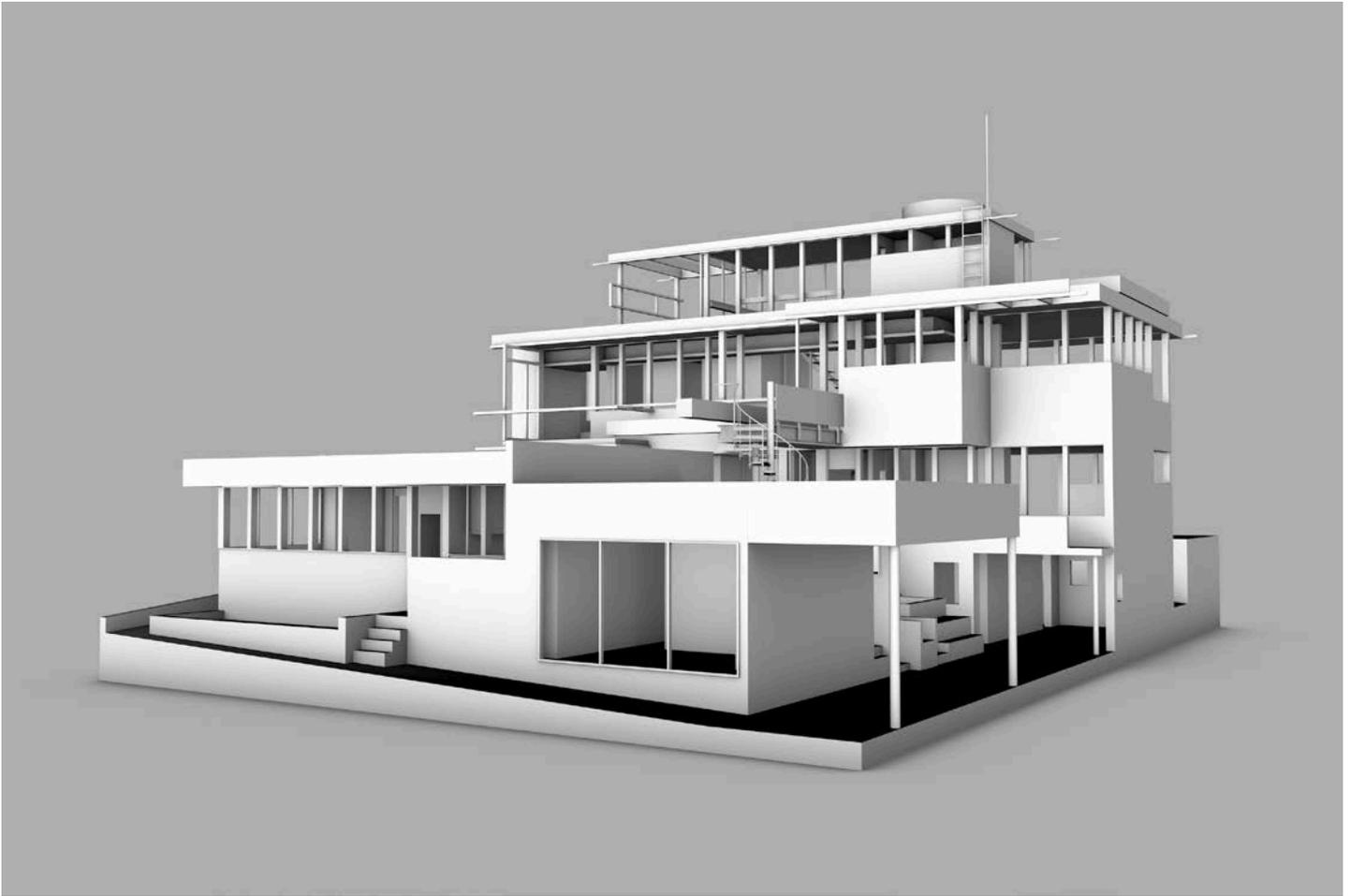
View of North and West faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking southeast, showing north patio and sloping terrain of property.

PROPERTY NAME

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View of North and East faces of digital model of Neutra compound looking Southwest.

PROPERTY NAME

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Figures and Maps

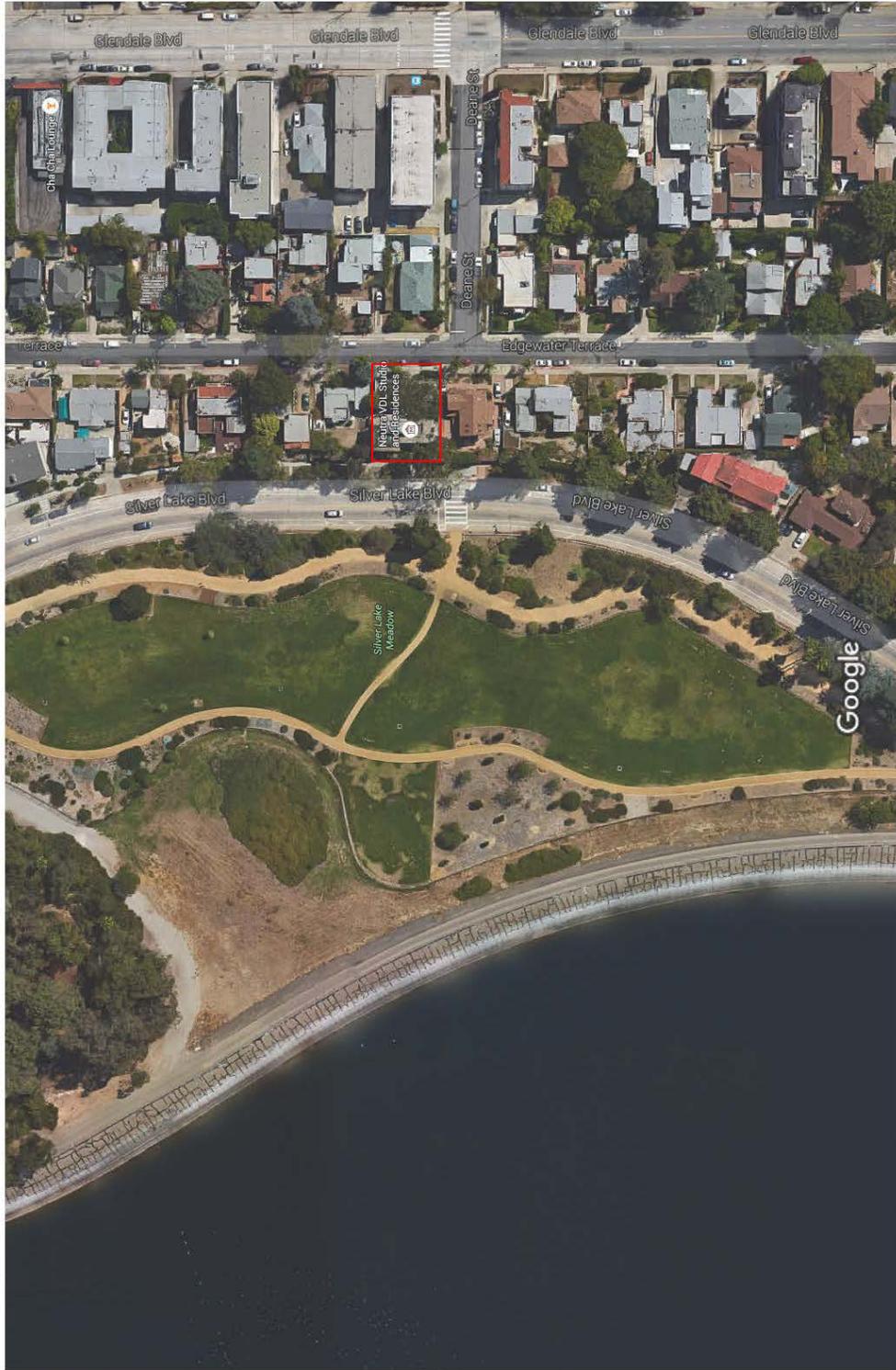
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1/11/2016

Google Maps



2300 Silver Lake Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90039 34.098434, -118.260368



<https://www.google.com/maps/@34.098434,-118.261245,255m/data=!3m1!1e3>

PROPERTY NAME

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

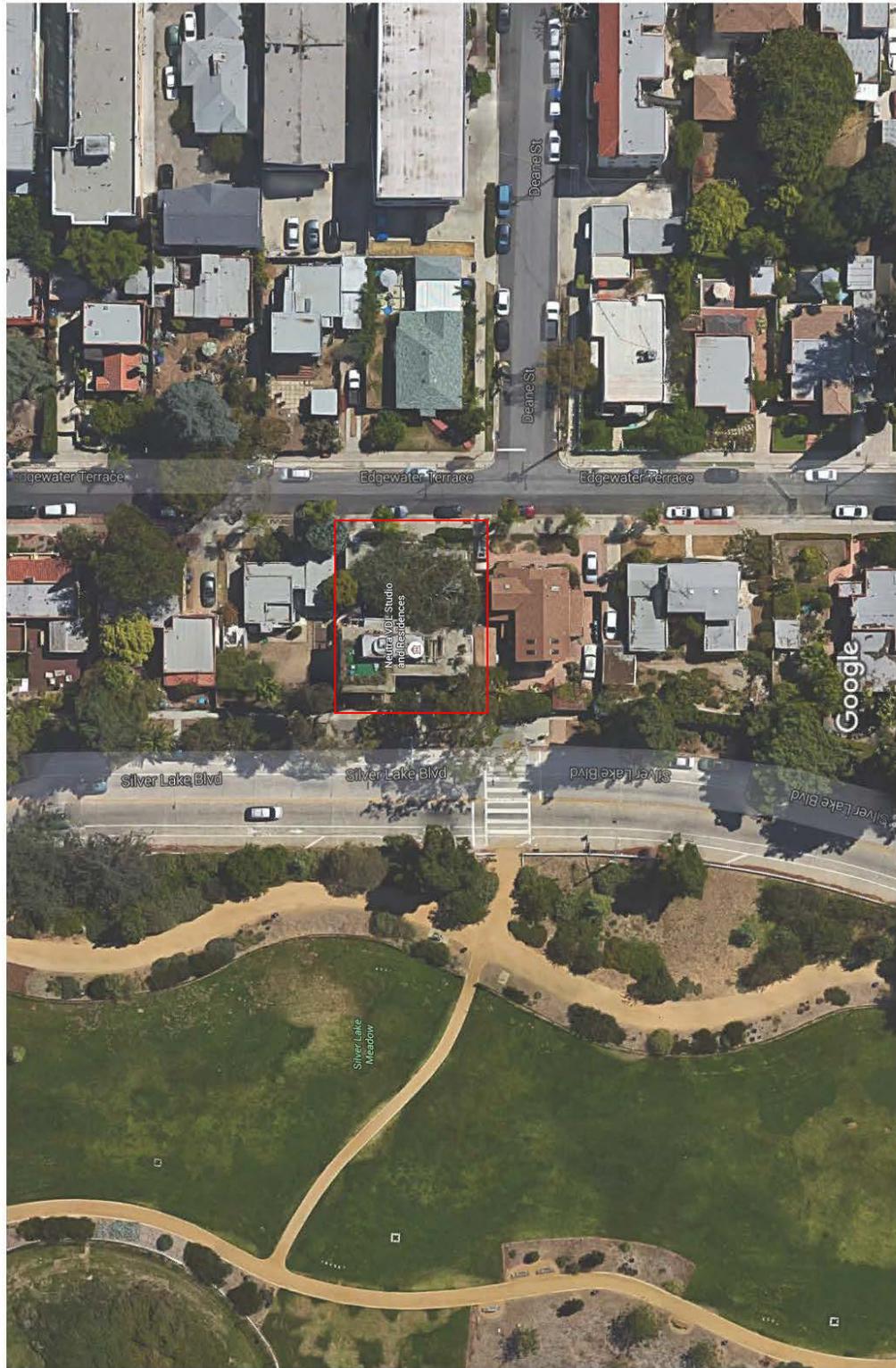
Figures and Maps

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1/11/2016

Google Maps

Google Maps 2300 Silver Lake Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90039 34.098434, -118.260368



<https://www.google.com/maps/@34.0983881,-118.2605095,127m/data=!3m1!1e3>