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NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply, or information is not available, or if the property is being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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MAR - 4 2016
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pearlman Mountain Cabin
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing:
Residential Architecture of John Lautner in Southern California, 1940-1994
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 52820 Middleridge Drive
City or town: Idyllwild State: CA County: Riverside
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B X C ___D

State Historic Preservation Officer 2 March 2016

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

California Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. 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:) _____

for Elson M. Beall 4.19.16

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Domestic:
Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Domestic:
Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Modern Movement:
Other: Organic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood: Log
Concrete
Glass

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin was designed by John Lautner in the Organic style. It is located in Idyllwild, California, approximately 100 miles northwest of San Diego. The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is set back from the street on its 0.35-acre parcel surrounded by dense forestation. The house exhibits the natural shapes, interesting geometries, and symbiosis with the site associated with Organic-influenced Mid-century Modern homes. The Pearlman Mountain Cabin retains significant character-defining features on the interior and exterior. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is located on the northwest side of Middle Ridge Drive, on the western slope of the San Jacinto Mountains in Idyllwild, California. The sloping lot is bounded on the southeast by Middle Ridge Drive, on the west by a single-family residence, and on the north by forested land. The property contains a one-story, single-family residence constructed in

1957. It is situated at the middle of the lot amid mature trees. The cabin is designed in Lautner's characteristic Organic style. It is of timber frame construction with a concrete foundation. It has an irregular plan composed of a central circular volume with a conical roof and two wedge-shaped projections, a flat-roofed wing to the east and a small wood deck to the northwest. Exterior walls are finished in cement plaster. The walls along the southwest façade, nestled into the hillside, are primarily solid. The northeast façade consists of floor-to-ceiling glass walls with a sawtooth plan, supported by columns made of cedar tree trunks on concrete footings. The primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the south façade of the bedroom wing and consists of a flush wood door with a sidelight. The entrance is accessed by a curved flight of concrete steps. Fenestration consists primarily of small, rectangular clerestory windows punched through the retaining wall.

The central circular volume contains the cabin's main room, an open living /sleeping area overlooking the wooded view beyond. The circular room houses a kitchenette and a concrete hearth. A pair of French doors on the west wall opens to the exterior and aligns with a large oak tree beyond. A single glazed wood door on the north façade opens to the small wood deck. The floor is of wood planks and the ceiling of plywood. The southeast wing contains the entrance, a small bathroom, a bedroom, and a utility room.

Integrity

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin retains all seven aspects of integrity.

- **Location:** The Pearlman Mountain Cabin remains on its original site. It retains integrity of location.
- **Design:** The Pearlman Mountain Cabin retains significant character-defining features of its original Organic-influenced Mid-century Modern design by John Lautner, including its composite plan with central circular volume, conical roof, concrete and wood frame construction, log columns, and sawtooth glass wall. It therefore retains integrity of design.
- **Setting:** The Pearlman Mountain Cabin maintains its original relationship to its sloping, wooded site and expansive mountain views, and the surrounding area remains sparsely developed with single-family residences. It retains integrity of setting.
- **Materials:** The Pearlman Mountain Cabin retains a majority of its historic materials, including its wood frame construction, tree trunk columns, cement plaster veneer, glass walls, wood plank flooring, and plywood ceiling panels. It retains integrity of materials.
- **Workmanship:** The Pearlman Mountain Cabin was simply built, utilizing older timber construction methods. It reflects the physical evidence of period construction techniques, including its wood frame construction, tree trunk columns, cement plaster veneer, and glass walls. It therefore retains integrity of workmanship.
- **Feeling:** The Pearlman Mountain Cabin retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, and continues to convey its historic Organic design. It therefore retains integrity of feeling.

- **Association:** The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling, which combine to convey its historic Organic design by master architect John Lautner. It retains integrity of association.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐

☒

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

☐ B. Removed from its original location

☐ C. A birthplace or grave

☐ D. A cemetery

☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐ F. A commemorative property

☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Architecture

Period of Significance

Significant Dates
1957

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Lautner, John (architect)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C as an excellent example of the Organic-influenced Mid-century Modern architecture of master architect John Lautner. It meets the registration requirements outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Residential Architecture of John Lautner in Southern California, 1940-1994" for this period of Lautner's work: exemplifies important characteristics of Lautner's work from this period; displays the

significant character-defining features of Organic architecture; dates from the period of significance; exhibits quality of design; and retains all seven factors of integrity. The period of significance is 1957, reflecting the date that the house was completed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is a significant example of the work of master architect John Lautner. It exemplifies the tenets of John Lautner's residential architecture identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Residential Architecture of John Lautner in Southern California, 1940-1994; Theme: John Lautner Residential Architecture in Southern California, 1956-1969." Lautner's fascination with new shapes and structures came from his determination to humanize spaces and create what he referred to as "real" architecture: "architecture that was authentic, creative, new – yet tied to ancient and timeless ways of building; based on the needs – including emotional needs – of his clients, and the demands of the site."[1] He brought to architecture an expressive and adventurous use of structure, form, and materials.[2] Although he did not consider himself a Modernist, Lautner's interests aligned with the mid-century spirit of architectural experimentation; these factors led Lautner toward bold explorations of hilltop houses, soaring concrete roofs, sculptural steel cantilevers, and expressive double curves. His work was structurally and technologically innovative, while also reflecting Wright's Organic principles of responding to the site and the specific needs of the client. Lautner had a fertile architectural practice for over 60 years, producing some of the most iconic and influential works in post-World War II Southern California and influencing a new generation of architects. In the 1940s, Lautner experimented with simple shapes to achieve an organic expression, melding buildings with their surroundings with the shaped floor plan and roof structure. In the mid-1950s and 1960s, Lautner's work applied the same principles to more complex geometric forms. During this latter period he also experimented with wood and concrete construction.

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is located in the Idyllwild arts colony, high on the western slope of Mt. San Jacinto, and was built for the musicians who summered there. Dr. Carl and Mrs. Agnes Pearlman commissioned John Lautner to design a seasonal residence in 1957. Since Idyllwild is an artists' retreat, Mrs. Pearlman requested that Lautner design a house that could function as a venue for small musical events. Over an entire day, Lautner sat on the giant rock that theoretically rendered the site unbuildable, and imagined an open cylinder with a platform deck, a circular roof hovering over it, and tree trunks supporting it. A serrated glass screen created the illusion of nothing between the shelter, the forest into which it was settled, and the skies and mountains beyond. The cabin is composed of an open, circular room that contains the kitchen, living and sleeping areas with two projecting wings. One wing is composed of a deck that overlooks the trees and the mountains, and the other houses the bathroom and a small bedroom. A large section of the plan was left open in order to draw in the light and views from

[1] Dave Weinstein, "John Lautner's 'Keeping it Real' Approach to Architecture," http://www.eichlernetwork.com/article/beyond-flash-and-fantasy (accessed July 2015).
[2] Ann Philbin, Foreword in Nicholas Olsberg, ed., *Between Earth and Heaven: The Architecture of John Lautner* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2008), 6.

outside, as well as to create a sense of unity between the indoor spaces and the surrounding nature.

Carl Pearlman (1908-1998) was born in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York.[3] From an early age, he knew he wanted to be a physician and follow in his eldest brother's footsteps. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from New York University, following which he attended Dalhousie University Medical School in Halifax, Nova Scotia, receiving an award for highest standing in medicine at graduation. During WWII, Pearlman served as a major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and was stationed for a time in Huntington, West Virginia, where he met his future wife, Agnes Branch. They were married in 1945. In 1948, after Pearlman completed urological specialty training at the Medical College of Georgia, he and his wife moved to Santa Ana, California with their two young children. He served for many years as clinical professor of urology at University of California, Irvine, Medical School, as well as chairman of the first expansion fund for St. Joseph Hospital, chief of staff at Santa Ana Community Hospital (now Western Community Hospital), and chief of staff at the former Orange County General Hospital. In 1984, Pearlman was the second physician to be honored as Physician of the Year by the Orange County Medical Association. He was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and a Diplomat of the American Board of Urology. Pearlman was the first chairman in Orange County of the Bonds for Israel, and served as chairman for the United Jewish Welfare Fund, as well as on the Jewish Family Service and the Nursing Home Advisory Committee. He was a member of the board of directors of the Anti-Defamation League and was an honoree of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (now known as the National Conference for Community and Justice). The Orange County Philharmonic Society had its inception in the Pearlmans' Santa Ana home. Pearlman and his wife served on the board of directors of the Idyllwild Arts Foundation and actively promoted the efforts of the Ecology Center of Southern California, a project of Educational Communications.

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is a distinctive example of Lautner's careful integration of residential architecture into the surrounding landscape. He accented the smooth transition between the interior and the exterior by concealing the edges of the window panes in the ceiling and tree trunk structural columns, which conceptually, visually, and spatially mediated the transition from the architectural space to the surrounding landscapes. By incorporating a natural element into his design, Lautner took the Modernist notion of blending indoors and outdoors one step further, and melded them into a seamless whole.

Frank Escher described the Pearlman Mountain Cabin as follows:

> A wooden building in a wooded setting, the Pearlman Mountain Cabin is essentially a circular room for music, sitting, cooking, and sleeping. […] The roof is a disk with a flat circular center and a tapered edge, folded down to the wall at the back, and crimped up at the large opening in the front. The construction of the

[3] Information about Carl Pearlman adapted from "Obituary: Carl Kenneth Pearlman," *Idyllwild Town Crier*, November 30, 1998, http://idyllwildtowncrier.com/1998/11/30/obituary-carl-kenneth-pearlman/, accessed July 8, 2015.

> roof is less complicated than its form may suggest: wooden trusses, braced at the center of the house, radiate out to support it. Across the opening, the roof rests on a row of actual tree trunks. Enormous sheets of glass set directly into these logs form a delicate screen through which one gazes with wonder at the panorama unfolding beyond.[4]

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin design is a highly innovative solution for the site and the client: a family house with ample light and views on a restrictive lot. It exemplifies Lautner's keen response to the visual and physical qualities of the site, another defining characteristic of his residential work. Here, he took full advantage of the cabin's surroundings, precisely situating the house and positioning the tree trunk structural columns with sensitivity to the site and its surrounding natural scenery.

Organic Architecture

Frank Lloyd Wright first used the term 'organic architecture' in an article for *Architectural Record* in August 1914.[5] Wright applied the word organic to "'living' structure – a structure or concept wherein features or parts are so organized in form and substance as to be, applied to purpose, integral. Everything that 'lives' is therefore organic."[6] Organic architecture meant a living architecture in which every composition, element, and detail was deliberately shaped for the job it was to perform. Wright stressed the unity of building, furnishings, and environment in an "organic-entity, as contrasted with that former insensate aggregation of parts…One great thing instead of a quarrelling collection of so many little things."[7] Wright expressed his concept of Organic design through crystalline plan forms, the possibility of growth by asymmetrical addition, the relationship of composition to site and client, and the use of local materials.[8]

The chief concept of Organic architecture is the merging of building and nature, so that the design responds to the environment rather than imposing itself upon it. Organic architecture grew out of the site from within, employing natural shapes, complex geometries, and new building materials and technologies to unify all elements of the design – site, structure, spaces, fixtures, finishes, and furnishing - into a single harmonious unit.[9]

John Lautner's work from this period represents important tenets of Organic architecture, along with influences from his mentor, Frank Lloyd Wright. Lautner's early work most directly reflects Wright's influence, along with Lautner's own emphasis on natural materials and the importance of site specific architecture. The Pearlman Mountain Cabin reflects important character-defining

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[4] Frank Escher, "Continuity: Structuring Space," *Between Heaven and Earth: The Architecture of John Lautner*, ed. Nicholas Olsberg, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2008, p. 129.
[5] Adapted from "Wright – Organic Architecture," Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, http://www.flwright.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Wright-Organic-Architecture.pdf (accessed August 2015).
[6] Frank Lloyd Wright, *Modern Architecture; Being the Kahn Lectures for 1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931), 27.
[7] Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 25.
[8] Peter Collins, "The Biology of Analogy," *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 1750-1950* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).
[9] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 656.

features of Lautner's residential architecture from this period, including its composite plan with central circular volume; conical roof; wood frame construction; log columns; sawtooth glass wall; and exterior walls finished in cement plaster.

Conclusion

The Pearlman Mountain Cabin is an excellent example of Organic architecture by master architect John Lautner. It meets the registration requirements outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Residential Architecture of John Lautner in Southern California, 1940-1994; Theme: John Lautner Residential Architecture in Southern California, 1956-1969." It retains significant character-defining features of the original and retains all seven aspects of integrity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Campbell-Lange, Barbara-Ann. *John Lautner, 1911-1994: Disappearing Space.* Köln, Germany: Taschen, 2005.

Collins, Peter. "The Biology of Analogy." *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 1750-1950.* London: Faber and Faber, 1965.

Conrads, Ulrich. *Programs and Manifestos on 20th-century Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999.

Esher, Frank. *John Lautner, Architect*. New York: Princeton Architectural, 1998.

Hess, Alan. *The Architecture of John Lautner*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1999.

Lautner, John. The John Lautner Archive. Accessed May 11, 2011. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* 2nd ed. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.

"Obituary: Carl Kenneth Pearlman." *Idyllwild Town Crier*. November 30, 1998. Accessed July 8, 2015. http://idyllwildtowncrier.com/1998/11/30/obituary-carl-kenneth-pearlman/.

Olsberg, Nicholas, ed. *Between Earth and Heaven: The Architecture of John Lautner*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2008.

Weinstein, Dave. "John Lautner's 'Keeping it Real' Approach to Architecture." http://www.eichlernetwork.com/article/beyond-flash-and-fantasy. Accessed July 2015.

Wright, Frank Lloyd. *Modern Architecture; Being the Kahn Lectures for 1930.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931.

"Wright – Organic Architecture." Frank Lloyd Wright Trust. http://www.flwright.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Wright-Organic-Architecture.pdf. Accessed August 2015.

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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:
____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
__X__ Other
Name of repository: _Getty Research Institute; Lautner Foundation _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __0.35_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 33.730594 Longitude: -116.740882

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is located at 52820 Middleridge Drive. The parcel is bounded by Middleridge Drive on the south and east, a single-family house on the west, and the hillside on the north.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries represent the historic and current boundaries of the Pearlman Mountain Cabin property.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _Original nomination prepared by Joyceline Matinez and Felipe Ortega, California State Polytechnic University Pomona, under the guidance of Lauren Weiss Bricker and Luis G. Hoyos

Revised nomination:
name/title: Christine Lazzaretto, Principal; John LoCascio, Senior Architect; Molly Iker, Associate Architectural Historian
organization: Historic Resources Group
street & number: _12 S. Fair Oaks, Suite 200_____
city or town: Pasadena_____ state: CA_____ zip code:_91105___
e-mail_christine@historicresourcesgroup.com
telephone:_626-793-2400 x112_____
date:_August 6, 2015 _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Pearlman Mountain Cabin

City or Vicinity: Idyllwild

County: Riverside State: California

Photographer: Joyceline Martinez Jimenez

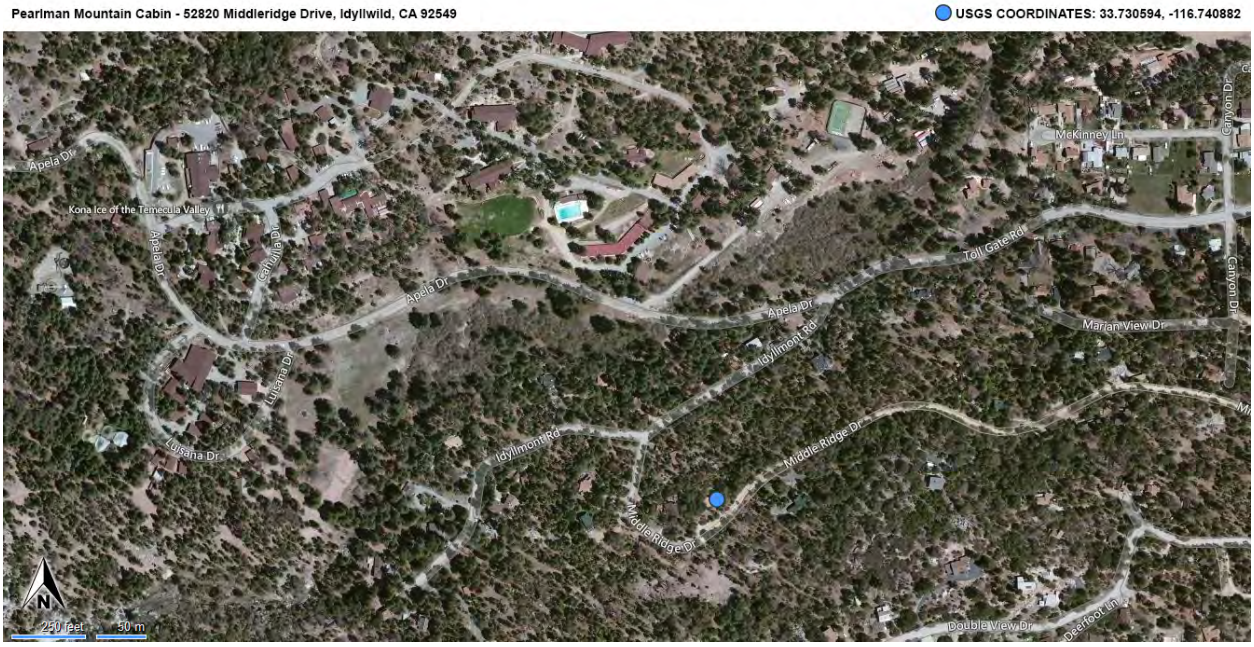
Date Photographed: May 25, 2011 and August 30, 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

PHOTO #	DESCRIPTION/VIEW
0001	View of north façade, facing south.
0002	View of deck, facing southwest.
0003	View of central space, facing northeast.
0004	View of entry on south façade, facing north.

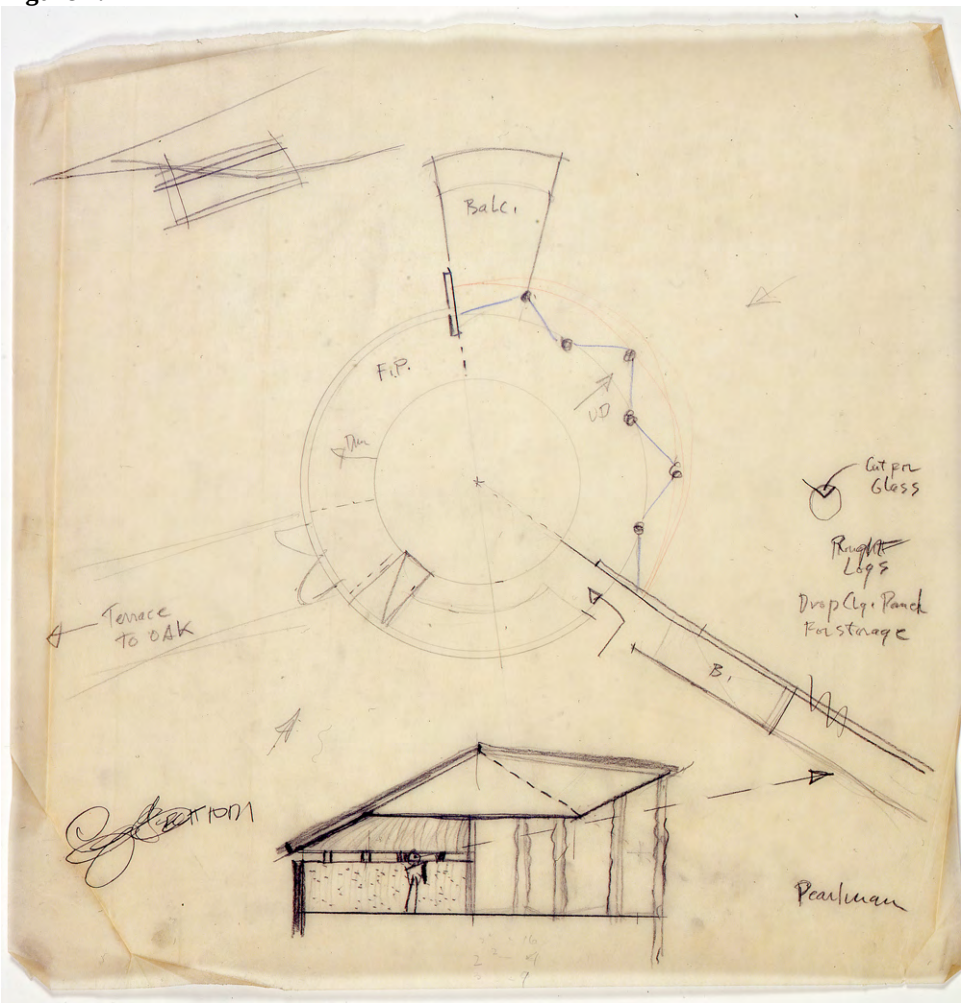
Additional Documentation: Location Map

Figure 1.



Additional Documentation: Sketch

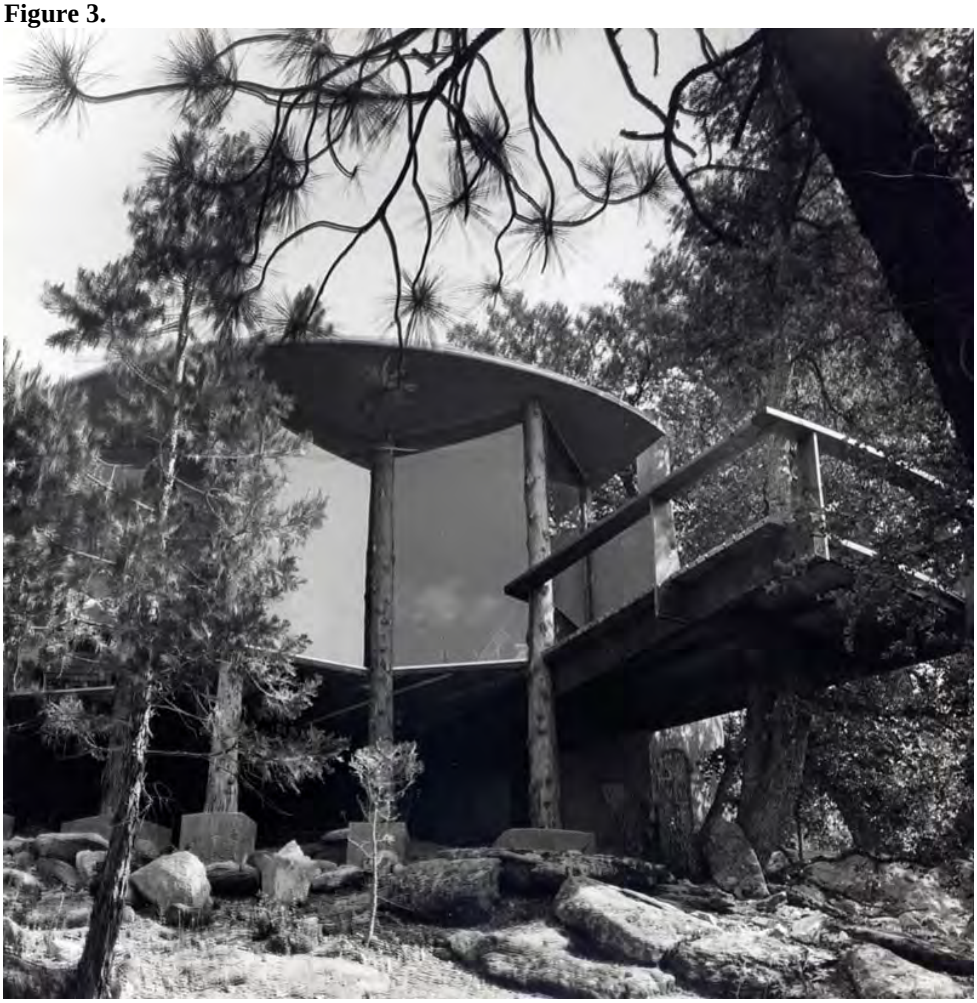
Figure 2.



Sketch of Pearlman Mountain Cabin (© The John Lautner Foundation, 1957)

Additional Documentation: Photographs

Figure 3.



View of sawtooth windows and deck, facing south (© The John Lautner Foundation, courtesy of Frank Escher, date of photograph unknown)

Figure 4.

View of deck, facing southeast (Photo credit: Flickr – James, photographed in 2008)

Figure 5.

View of south façade, facing north (Photo credit: Flickr – James, photographed in 2008)

Figure 6.

View of west and north façade, facing west (Photo credit: Flickr – James, photographed in 2008)

Figure 7.

View of west and south façade, facing northwest (Photo credit: Flickr – James, photographed in 2008)

Figure 8.

Interior detail of living room and sawtooth windows (© The John Lautner Foundation, courtesy of Frank Escher, date of photograph unknown)

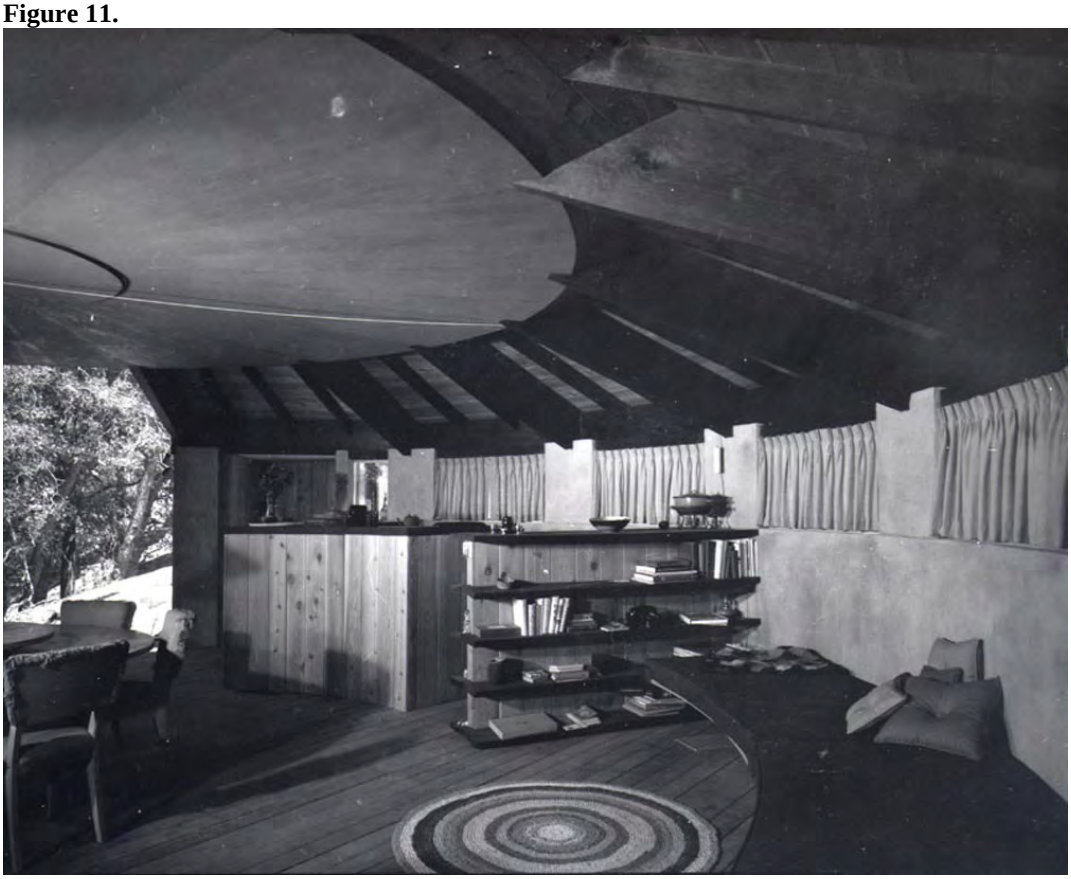
Figure 9.

Interior detail of living room and deck (© The John Lautner Foundation, courtesy of Frank Escher, date of photograph unknown)

Figure 10.

Interior detail of living room (© The John Lautner Foundation, courtesy of Frank Escher, date of photograph unknown)

Figure 11.



Interior detail of living room (© The John Lautner Foundation, courtesy of Frank Escher, date of photograph unknown)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.