

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

**CASE NO.: CHC-2011-1749-HCM
ENV-2010-1750-CE**

HEARING DATE: July 21, 2011
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 7960 Fareholm Drive
Council District: 4
Community Plan Area: Hollywood
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Hollywood Hills West
Legal Description: Lot FR 17 of TR 6724

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
KUN RESIDENCE

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**APPLICANT/
OWNER:** Gerald V. Casale Trust
15260 Ventura Blvd.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

**APPLICANT'S
REPRESENTATIVE:** Anna Marie Brooks
1109 4th Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90019

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal may warrant further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning
[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:
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Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application
ZIMAS Report

SUMMARY

Built in 1936 and located in the Laurel Canyon area of Hollywood, this three-and-a-half-story single-family residence exhibits character-defining features of International Style architecture. Built on a downward sloping lot, the proposed Kun Residence historic monument at street level consists of an irregularly-planned flat-roofed building flanked by high walls. Exhibiting an asymmetrical façade, the building contains an off-center entrance, two-car garage doors, fixed clerestory windows, and a smooth stucco surface. Three additional stories descend down the hillside and are largely hidden from street level. The hillside elevation (south-facing) is asymmetrical as well and features horizontal recessed terracing bisected by an uninterrupted, solid vertical mass on the left. The ground floor has a recessed terrace with a horizontal ribbon of clerestory windows flanked by a rounded solid mass on the right. The second and third level contains horizontal ribbons of steel fixed and casement windows and terracing. This provides open-air circulation spaces for three bedrooms (second level) and for the kitchen and living space (third level). The top floor has an open-air terrace and roof deck, accessed from the main entrance and garage at street level. The portion of the subject building visible at street-level serves as a mid-length bay occupying only half the of the upper floor terracing. A staircase zigzags down from street level along the west side of the house, granting access to the second and first floors. The subject building is clad in smooth stucco with unadorned wall expanses. Landscape features include some mature trees and shrubbery.

The subject building was designed by master architect Richard Joseph Neutra (1892-1970) with architect Gregory Ain listed as a collaborator. Neutra, an internationally recognized architect, is recognized for his significant contributions to the advancement of the Modern architecture in Los Angeles. Born in Vienna in 1892, Neutra received his architectural education in Europe under the guidance of Adolf Loos and worked for Erich Mendelsohn in Berlin before immigrating to the United States in 1923. After working briefly for Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin, in 1925, Neutra moved to Los Angeles where he collaborated with Rudolf Schindler on numerous projects including the Lovell Beach House (1926). He subsequently developed his own practice and went on to design numerous buildings embodying the International Style, thirteen of which are designated as Historic Cultural Monuments (HCM), including the Lovell Heath House (HCM #123; 1929) and the Richard and Dion VDL Research House (HCM #640; 1966). At the time of the Kun residence commission in the 1930s, Neutra's international reputation had already been recognized.

The Kun Residence also appears to have served as the first subject of Julius Shulman's architectural photography, and served as his entrée into the field. In 1936, Shulman, a student at UCLA, was invited to see the Kun Residence by a friend working as a draftsman for Neutra, at that time overseeing the completion of the project. Shulman took several photos of the residence, which he shared with the friend, who passed them on to Neutra himself. The architect then aided Shulman in launching his career in architectural photography.

The proposed monument was constructed between 1935 and 1936 for Los Angeles Examiner printer, Joseph Kun. The subject residence was the first home designed by Richard J. Neutra that included all-electric fixtures, and was one of the first such homes in Los Angeles. Kun later commissioned Neutra in 1950 for another house, Kun Residence #2, up the road at 7947 Fareholm Drive.

The Kun Residence appears to be a significant and important record of Neutra's work during the late mid-to-late 1930s and shares many of the design details used in his other buildings of the period.

Alterations to the subject building had included an additional street wall, non-original gates, a wooden fence and non-original landscaping but have been removed by the current owner as part of an ongoing restoration effort. In 2010, restoration work was undertaken on light fixtures, windows and built-in screens, decking, doors, and the residence's kitchen.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

FINDINGS

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property is significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.