

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2007-463-HCM

HEARING DATE: February 15, 2007
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 12256 W. Canna Road
Council District: 11
Community Plan Area: Brentwood-Pacific Palisades
Area Planning Commission: West Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council: None
Legal Description: Lot 4 of TR 16210

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
GOULD-LAFETRA HOUSE

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**APPLICANT/
OWNER'S
REPRESENTATIVE:** Christy McAvoy and Laura Janssen
Historic Resources Group, LLC
1728 Whitley Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90028

OWNER: Michael LaFetra
12256 W. Canna Road
Los Angeles, CA 90049

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.125 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal may warrant further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: January 9, 2007 Historic-Cultural Monument Application
ZIMAS Report

SUMMARY

Built in 1968, this three-story residential building exhibits character-defining features of Modern architecture. The post-and-beam building is L-shaped in plan and exhibits glass and wood siding punctuated by stacked cement block columns and glu-lam beams. The exterior also features a rectangular porch and two cement chimneys. Windows are floor-to-ceiling. Significant interior spaces include an open floor plan, wood paneling, sliding doors, and built-in cabinetry. The property includes significant landscaping and a pool.

The proposed Gould-LaFetra House historic monument was designed in 1968 by architect Raymond Kappe. Kappe began practicing in the 1950s after working for the firm of Anshen & Allen where he designed homes for developer Joseph Eichler. Using open plan post-and-beam construction, Kappe has designed over one hundred single family homes in Southern California. Kappe taught at the University of Southern California (USC), founded the architecture department at California Polytechnic State University at Pomona (Cal Poly) and later established the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) where he served as its director until 1987. Kappe remains active as an architect, teacher, and planner.

The subject property may be significant as an example of the Modern style by a noteworthy architect.

Later alterations to the subject property some remodeling of bathrooms and kitchen area in the 1980s and the addition of a fireplace, master bedroom, deck, and built-in furniture designed by the original architect and part of the original plans.

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.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Gould-LaFetra House
2. STREET ADDRESS 12256 W. Canna Road
CITY Los Angeles ZIP CODE 90049 COUNCIL DISTRICT 11
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 449-3025-004
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT 16210
BLOCK _____ LOT(S) 4 ARB. NO. _____
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY N/A
6. PRESENT OWNER Michael LaFetra
STREET ADDRESS 12256 W. Canna Road
CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90049 PHONE (310) 471-3670
OWNER IS: PRIVATE PUBLIC _____
7. PRESENT USE Residential ORIGINAL USE Residential

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE California Modern
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET)
See attached.
- _____

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT Gould-LaFetra House

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: FACTUAL 1968 ESTIMATED _____

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER Raymond Kappe

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER Raymond Kappe

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS October 2006
(8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY)

14. CONDITION: EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR DETERIORATED NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

15. ALTERATIONS See attached.

16. THREATS TO SITE: NONE KNOWN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT VANDALISM PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT
 ZONING OTHER _____

17. IS THE STRUCTURE: ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE MOVED UNKNOWN

SIGNIFICANCE

18. BRIEF STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE (SEE OPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET)

See attached.

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) See attached.

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 01/08/2007 PREPARER'S NAME Christy McAvoy and Laura Janssen

ORGANIZATION Historic Resources Group, LLC STREET ADDRESS 1728 Whitley Ave.

CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90028 PHONE (323) 469-2349

Gould-LaFetra House (1968), 12256 Canna Road, Los Angeles, CA 90049

Raymond Kappe, architect

9. Physical Description

The Gould-LaFetra House, designed by architect Raymond Kappe, is a 3,360-square-foot, single-family home located in the hills of the Santa Monica Mountains north of Sunset Boulevard in the neighborhood of Brentwood at 12256 Canna Road. It sits on a downhill sloping lot just west of the 405 Freeway. The site is rectangular in shape, with its longest end opening up to the street. The property slopes down the hillside to the lot line of the property below.

The uniquely shaped, three-story post-and-beam structure was designed in the Modernist style with glass and wood siding, flat roof and expanses of floor-to-ceiling windows. L-shaped in plan, the house can be understood as a composition of linked square volumes. The northeastern volume houses the kitchen and family room. A southern volume sits on the opposite side of the entrance hall and holds the dining room, living room, the upstairs loft bedroom and three bedrooms on the lower level. The carport and outdoor recreation area form yet another volume at the eastern most end of the house. The house sits on a concrete slab foundation; the southern-most bedroom is cantilevered.

Exterior elevations adhere to the minimalist style of simplification of form and the elimination of ornament true to the Modernist style, emphasizing clean, geometric forms and horizontal lines. The northern façade facing Canna Road can hardly be seen due to the large trees lining the street. The geometric shaping of this home can most impressively be seen from the pool area or the roof-top deck. Each façade has glass and wood panel walls and is punctuated by floor-to-ceiling, stacked cement block columns and glu-lam beams. Exterior features include a rectangular porch at the house's southern-most end and two cement chimneys facing east.

Interior spaces maintain the simplicity and angles of the exterior, focusing on precision construction and a minimum of decorative detailing. Continuous materials and finishes throughout the house unify the interior spaces. The open plan was designed to maximize natural light, exterior views and access to the outdoors. Floor-to-ceiling windows with sliding glass doors provide dramatic western views and easy access to the exterior. There is a small balcony off the living room and a roof top deck with access from the upstairs bedroom.

A defining feature of the interior is the built-in cabinetry, which is used extensively throughout the house. These cabinets can be seen in the loft bedroom, living and family rooms, hallways, the sitting room and lower bedrooms. Other features original to the house include pocket doors and cylindrical cabinet and door hardware. The variety of original windows includes fixed windows, louver windows, sliding glass doors and windows and clerestory windows. Original steel reinforced concrete posts, glu-lam beams and wood strip paneled ceilings and walls can also be found. Cement and cobble stones are used to pave the front entry and interior entry hall.

Looking south from Canna Road, the front yard is characterized by a narrow row of mature trees. The carport can be seen to the east; there is a slender entry passage on the west side of the property. This passage directs one from the street, through the tree line, to cobble stone steps that lead to the front door. Visible from these steps is a small gravel yard that sits below the house to the south. The carport encloses an outdoor recreation area between it and the main house. The enclosed recreation area opens to stairs that lead down to the backyard.

Gould-LaFetra House (1968), 12256 Canna Road, Los Angeles, CA 90049
Raymond Kappe, architect

The backyard is dominated by a pool located south of the main house. The pool is surrounded by a walkway paved in concrete; concrete steps lead up to the main house. South of the pool, the property slopes downward dramatically to the lot line below. The sloped section directly to the south of the pool area has been covered with new vegetation; the area beyond that has been left wooded.

15. Alterations

The Gould-LaFetra House has had three owners. The original owners, the Goulds, made no alterations to the house. The second owner, the Jacobsons, updated and remodeled all the bathrooms and the kitchen in the 1980s. Part of that design program added teak cabinetry in the master dressing area and master bathroom. The current owner has worked with Mr. Kappe to add a fireplace in the living room and master bedroom, a rooftop deck outside the master bedroom, built-in furniture in the living room and a pool, which was in the original design concept, to the west of the house.

18. Statement of Significance

The Gould-LaFetra House was designed in 1966 and completed in 1968 by noted modernist residential architect Raymond Kappe. It is a rectilinear assembly of concrete towers, wood beams and a series of platforms referred to as the "modular system". Kappe excelled at using this systematic approach which did not limit his talents but allowed him the opportunity to blend a variety of spaces into a sculptural residential unit while still responsive to the human element. Kappe was also adept at designing houses on steep hillsides that other architects might consider unbuildable. These sites were considered a creative challenge for him and his houses took full advantage of steep slopes. The Gould-LaFetra House is located in Brentwood in the hills above Sunset Boulevard. The house drops 42-feet down a precipitous slope from the roof of the master bedroom to the terraced garden below. It is supported on slender reinforced concrete block columns that rest on pilings drilled 14-feet down into the bedrock, and all major beams are glue-laminated wood. This was the first house Kappe designed that incorporated laminated beams, which were an answer to the shortage of high quality timbers after the post-War building boom of the 1950s. The main body of the house is wrapped with glass on three sides, and the lower level bedrooms cantilever 16-feet. As a result, there is a feeling that one is floating above the canyon below and suspended in space. To make a small hillside lot appear larger and more expansive, Kappe framed views to create "borrowed landscapes," a Japanese convention that was the act of reaching out and establishing a connection between the foreground and the background. These achievements are evident and skillfully carried out in the Gould-LaFetra House.

Modern Residential Architecture of Southern California in the 1950s

Ray Kappe began his practice in the early 1950s in Southern California. At that time the region was booming, with the return and migration of servicemen and their families after the end of World War II. As a result, it was also facing a housing shortage. Prior to that, the experiments of earlier modern architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard Neutra and Rudolf Schindler, were increasingly drawing the world's attention by the way they were re-shaping the region's homes and work places. In addition, John Entenza, the publisher of *Arts and Architecture* magazine, in 1945, decided to demonstrate the potential of residential Modern architecture through the Case Study House Program. It was a way to demonstrate that Modern architecture could be aesthetically pleasing for the general public and not just for those with

Gould-LaFetra House (1968), 12256 Canna Road, Los Angeles, CA 90049
Raymond Kappe, architect

progressive views, and he hoped to provide high quality housing at a reasonable cost. The Case Study architects took ideas from the early moderns and expanded on them, particularly the idea of the open floor plan. More than ever before they opened up the interior of the house to the exterior and made solid walls secondary to walls of glass. The emphasis was on a new way of thinking about how the family now lived with the elimination of formal spaces and addition of leisure spaces such as family rooms and outdoor patios. The Case Study Program brought the possibilities of modern design in domestic architecture to wide public attention and influenced the next generation of modern architects, who adopted many of the stylistic innovations but developed a somewhat different approach to the family home.

Modern residential architecture of the 1950s and into the 1960s was typically post-and-beam construction of wood and glass, which further brought the outside in through the expansive glass walls. Often the wood beams were left natural to further enhance the visual connection between the house and the garden. This style of architecture was wholly modern in concept but had influences of Japanese architecture, which had also influenced the early moderns especially Frank Lloyd Wright and his low-slung Prairie School houses, and Greene and Greene's Craftsman bungalows. Both were experimenting with open floor plans, horizontal massing and incorporating natural elements into the residence. The post-and-beam house was a descendant from earlier modern ideals and in turn influenced a generation of developer-built homes in the form of the California Ranch house with open floor plans, natural wood elements, sliding glass doors and flat or low-pitched roofs. It became a major contributor to the influence of Southern California architecture and lifestyles on the rest of the country.

The initial goal of architects of the postwar Modern movement—to build moderately priced homes—could have been realized through the post-and-beam structural system, which was fairly simple to build and could utilize more readily available construction skills. But most moderately priced homes continued to take a conservative route and were wood framed “tract homes,” which was a more populist form of architecture that answered the need presented from the tremendous population growth in Southern California in the 1950s and distinguishes much of the Los Angeles streetscape today.

Ray Kappe was one of the principal architects working in the post-and-beam idiom. He experimented with prefabrication hoping he could test his systems on large tracts of houses, but he never had a large housing developer for a client. As a result he used his custom-built houses to explore various systems of construction. He repeatedly returned to a module system as a basis for organization which also happened to be a repetitive construction method and allowed for some prefabrication, but not on the scale he had envisioned early in his career. All of his experimentations were an attempt to solve the affordable housing issue while avoiding the stigma of the box. Kappe eventually developed a style of architect-designed homes that were ideal for the Southern California climate and lifestyle, and designed to suit the needs of their owners while not compromising his architectural philosophy.

Raymond Kappe, Architect

The subtle design of a Ray Kappe house quietly carries out the intention of the architect, who has been committed to creating comfortable yet innovative houses for over fifty years. The exteriors of his houses often disappear behind thick plantings, but the interiors soar with expansive views, interlocking volumes and simple materials, ingenious plans and efficient structures. They are a comfortable fit for their sites and the needs of their owners, and respond well to the temperate climate of southern California.

Gould-LaFetra House (1968), 12256 Canna Road, Los Angeles, CA 90049
Raymond Kappe, architect

Born in Minneapolis in 1927, his family moved to Los Angeles in 1940. As a teenager, he read an article about the architecture profession and realized this would allow him to combine his love of drawing and his skill at math and science. Kappe graduated with an architecture degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1951. He briefly apprenticed for the architecture firm of Anshen & Allen where he worked on designing homes for developer Joseph Eichler. Anticipating that Los Angeles would be a more dynamic place to work in the modern idiom, he moved back to southern California. Kappe found work with modern architect Carl Maston where he further developed his skills. “It was a very optimistic period. There were greater opportunities for young architects, and a spirit of collegiality. We built primarily for young couples and we wanted everyone to enjoy the benefits of the modern house.”¹

Kappe established his own practice in 1954. Eager to tap the post-World War II housing boom and its remarkable tolerance for new ideas, he built his first houses in the foothills of the San Fernando Valley where farmland was being rapidly transformed into suburbia. They were open-plan, post-and-beam suburban houses designed to exploit Southern California’s temperate climate. Bedrooms were small, with most square footage applied to living areas that opened to patios. He was interested in developing alternative design solutions and getting as much feeling of space as possible. Later his work focused on custom-built single-family homes based on the modular system using wood and glass, which further explored the relationship of indoor-outdoor living—which rapidly became a very Southern California concept for residential architecture.

Kappe has completed some 100 single-family houses over the years, each an example of his strength as an architect: his ability to answer complex design problems with inventive, beautiful buildings. One of the biggest problems on a project were steeply sloped sites. His answer was to lift the house over the site, sparing trees and the delicate beauty of the topography. “Developers at the time were cutting hills to make pads. I’d been working on the idea of a system of modules to get buildings above grade,” he says. “Many of my houses ended up using this system because it required the least amount of foundation.”²

Throughout his career, Kappe has explored many avenues of interest, all the while continuing his residential practice. He was especially drawn to urban planning and co-founded a collaborative, Kahn Kappe Lotery [Boccatto] Architects Planners, to work on those projects and others. He taught design at the University of Southern California, and in 1968 founded the architecture department at California Polytechnic State University at Pomona (Cal Poly). After a philosophical disagreement with Cal Poly’s administration he left with a few of his teachers and students in 1972 to establish the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). He directed the school—which quickly became famous for its free-thinking and freewheeling creativity—until 1987, making it one of the most innovative and influential architecture schools in the world.

Kappe remains active as an architect, teacher and planner. His success in all three areas, along with the respect of his peers and numerous professional honors has established Ray Kappe as a notable figure in the modern movement of Southern California.

¹ Michael Webb, *Themes and Variations: House Design Ray Kappe Architects/Planners*, (Australia: The Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd, 1998), p. 9.

² <http://www.kappedu.com/RayKappe.html>. Accessed 12/29/06.

Gould-LaFetra House (1968), 12256 Canna Road, Los Angeles, CA 90049
Raymond Kappe, architect

19. Sources

Dailey, Victoria and Natalie Shivers and Michael Dawson. *LA's Early Moderns*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 2003.

Gebhard, David and Robert Winter. *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide*. Salt Lake City, MO: Gibbs-Smith Publisher, 1994.

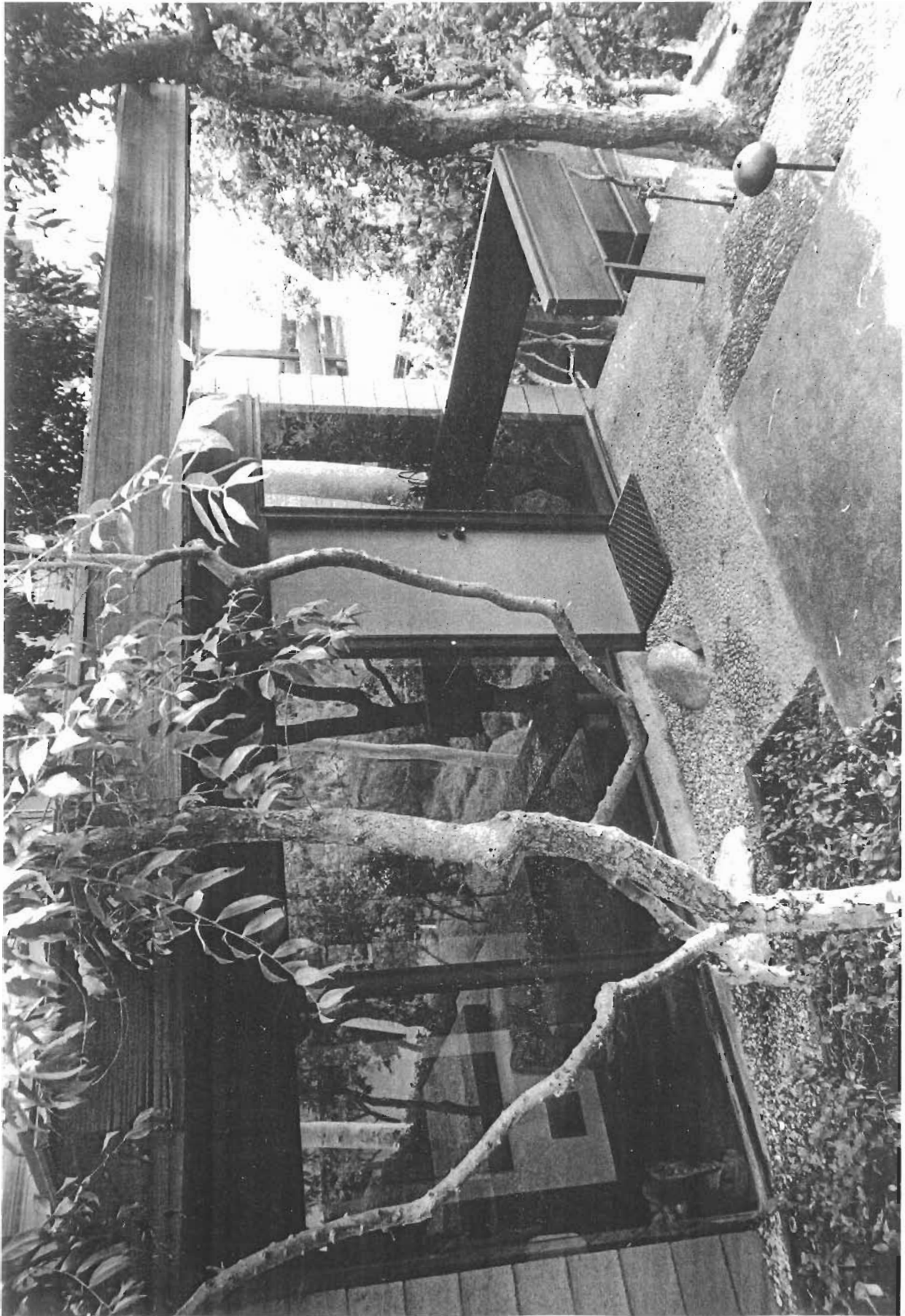
Gleye, Paul. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981.

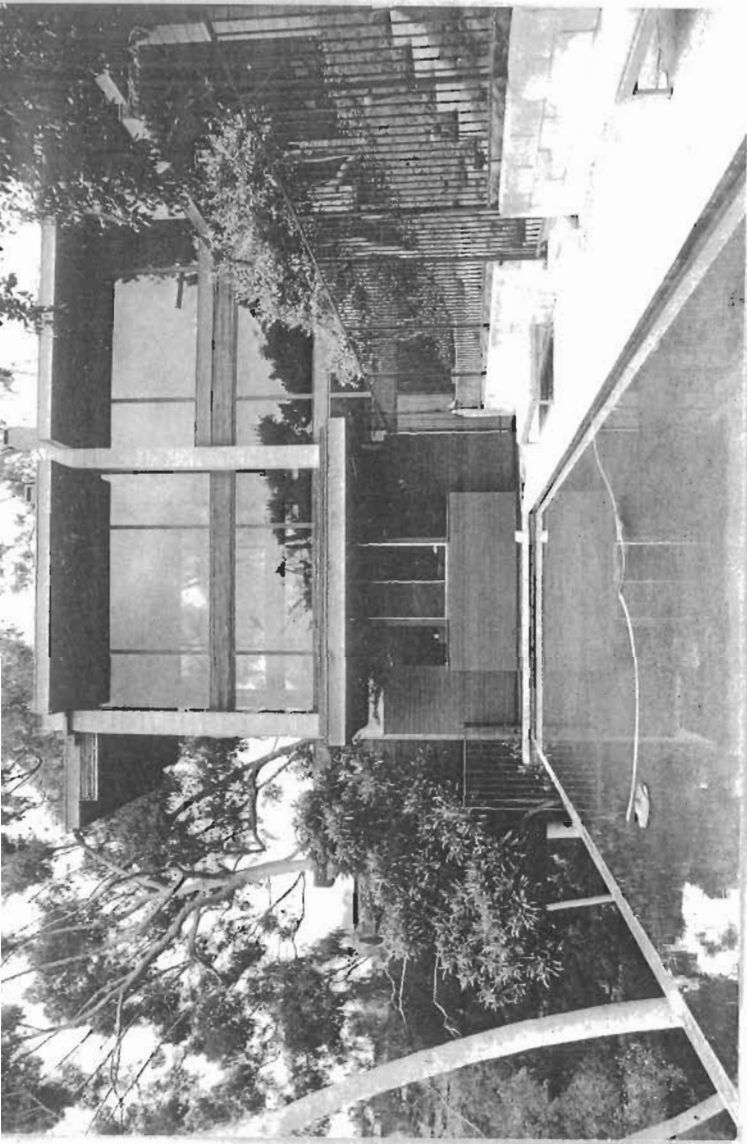
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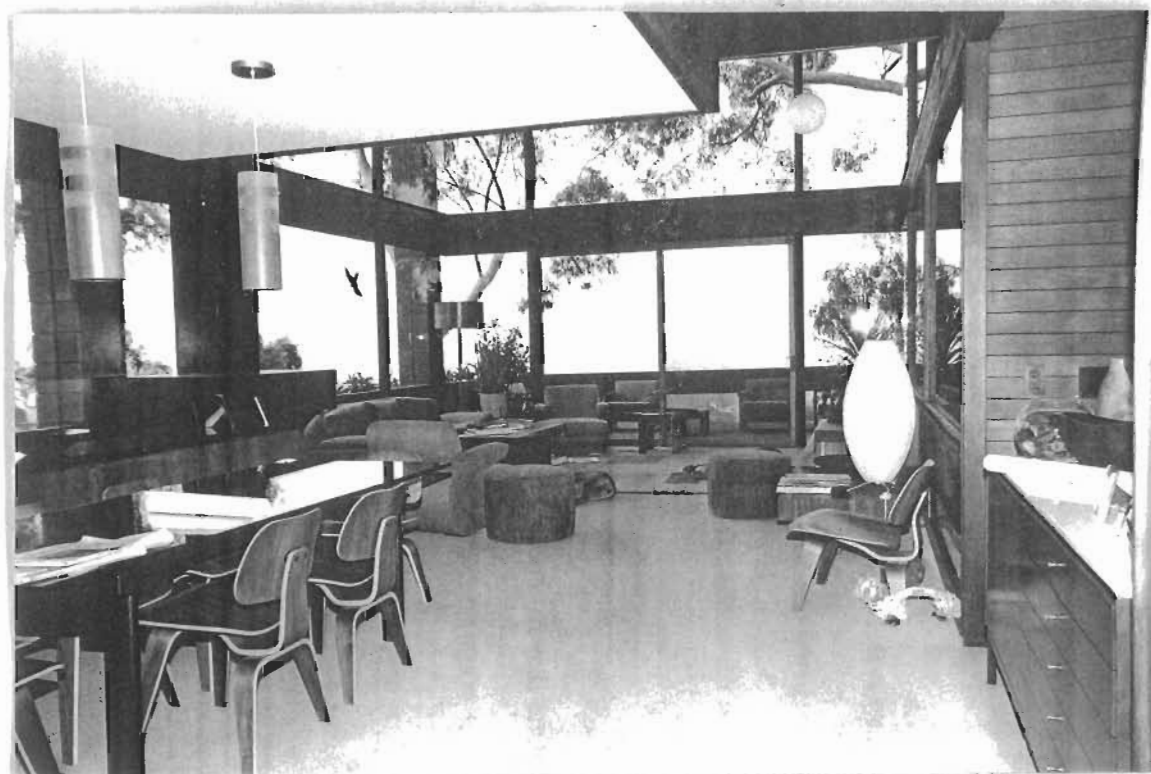
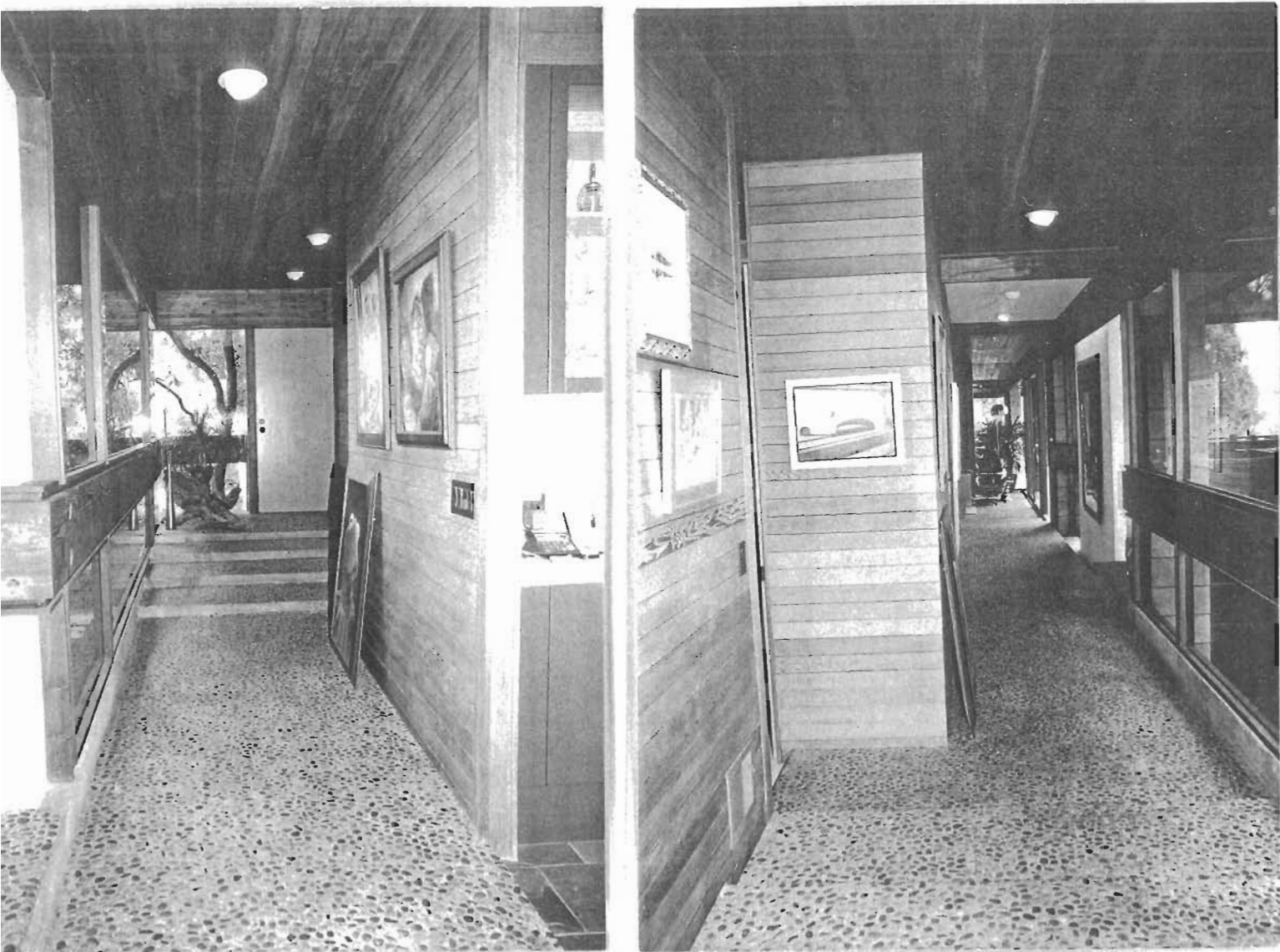
Serraino, Pierluigi and Julius Shulman. *Modernism Rediscovered*. New York: Taschen, 2000.

Webb, Michael. *Themes and Variations: House Design Ray Kappe Architects/Planners*. Australia: The Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd, 1998.

<http://www.kappedu.com/RayKappe.html>. Accessed 12/29/06.









City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

01/29/2007

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

PROPERTY ADDRESSES

12256 W CANNA ROAD

ZIP CODES

90049

RECENT ACTIVITY

None

CASE NUMBERS

YV-14335

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number:	141B137 89
Area (Calculated):	13,689.6 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid:	PAGE 591 - GRID F7
Assessor Parcel Number:	4493025004
Tract:	TR 16210
Map Reference:	M B 415-4/6
Block:	None
Lot:	4
Arb (Lot Cut Reference):	None
Map Sheet:	141B137

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area:	Brentwood - Pacific Palisades
Area Planning Commission:	West Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council:	None
Council District:	CD 11 - Bill Rosendahl
Census Tract #:	2623.02
LADBS District Office:	West Los Angeles

Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes:	None
Zoning:	RE15-1-H
Zoning Information (ZI):	None
General Plan Land Use:	Very Low II Residential
Plan Footnote - Site Req.:	See Plan Footnotes
Additional Plan Footnotes:	Brentwood
Specific Plan Area:	None
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone:	None
Historical Cultural Monument:	None
Mills Act Contract Number:	None
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts:	None
CDO - Community Design Overlay:	None
Streetscape:	No
Sign District:	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area:	None
35% Density Bonus:	Not Eligible
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency:	None
Central City Parking:	No
Downtown Parking:	No
Building Line:	None
500 Ft School Zone:	No

Assessor Information

Assessor Parcel Number:	4493025004
Parcel Area (Approximate):	13,634.3 (sq ft)
Use Code:	0101 - Single Residence with Pool
Building Class:	D10D
Assessed Land Val.:	\$1,868,334
Assessed Improvement Val.:	\$473,207
Year Built:	1967
Last Owner Change:	01/24/05
Last Sale Amount:	\$0
Number of Units:	1
Number of Bedrooms:	5
Number of Bathrooms:	4
Building Square Footage:	3,448.0 (sq ft)
Tax Rate Area:	67
Deed Reference No.:	No

Additional Information

Airport Hazard:	980' Height Limit Above Elevation 747
Coastal Zone:	None
Farmland:	Area not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone:	Yes
Fire District No. 1:	No
Fire District No. 2:	No
Flood Zone:	None
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties:	No
Methane Hazard Site:	None
High Wind Velocity Areas:	No
Hillside Grading:	Yes
Oil Wells:	None
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone:	No
Distance to Nearest Fault:	0.88974 (km)
Landslide:	Yes
Liquefaction:	No

Economic Development Areas

Business Improvement District:	None
Federal Empowerment Zone:	None
Renewal Community:	No
Revitalization Zone:	None
State Enterprise Zone:	None
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative:	None

Public Safety

Police Information:	
Bureau:	West
Division / Station:	West Los Angeles
Report District:	813
Fire Information:	
District / Fire Station:	19
Batallion:	9
Division:	1
Red Flag Restricted Parking:	No

CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for Case Summaries is Retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) Database.

DATA NOT AVAILABLE

YV-14335