



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 11, 2013 REPORT NO. HRB-13-018

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of April 25, 2013

SUBJECT: **ITEM #11 – Case Study House #23C**

APPLICANT: Sara Loe, Los Angeles Conservancy Modernism Committee
Owner: Nancy and Joseph Manno

LOCATION: 2329 Rue de Anne, 92037, La Jolla Community, Council District 1

DESCRIPTION: Review the National Register Nomination of Case Study House #23C

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend the listing of Case Study House #23C located at 2329 Rue de Anne to the Office of Historic Preservation.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board pursuant to the Office of Historic Preservation requirement that the local jurisdiction be provided 60 days to review and comment on a National Register of Historic Places nomination. The nomination for Case Study House #23C is part of a multiple properties listing being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance for its association with John Entenza and *Arts & Architecture* magazine's experimental modern housing in the post war years and for embodying the distinctive characteristics of residential architecture of the Modern Movement in California, and the Case Study House program in particular. The multiple property submission, under the context: Experimental modern residential architecture of the Case Study House Program in California: 1945-1966, covers the houses that were part of the Case Study Program in California from 1945 to 1966.

ANALYSIS

A National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report was prepared by Peter Moruzzi and Sara Loe which concludes that the resource is significant under National Register Criteria A and C. Staff concurs that the site is a significant historical resource under National Historic Register Criteria A and C at the local level of significance as follows.

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

Case Study House #23C is significant under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for its association with John Entenza's *Arts & Architecture* magazine Case Study House program. The Case Study House program lasted from 1945 to 1966 and was one of the most significant efforts in designing and building experimental residential housing in the United States. Overall, 35 houses and one apartment building were published while only 25 were actually constructed.

John Entenza, an architectural and modern movement enthusiast, purchased the locally focused *California Arts and Architecture* magazine in 1938 with hopes of reaching a more national audience covering many facets of the Modern Movement under a new name, *Arts & Architecture* magazine. By 1945, Entenza recognized the need for more housing post World War II. Anticipating the mass construction of traditional style houses throughout the country, Entenza initiated the Case Study House program as a way to offer the public and building industry models for low-cost housing in the modernist style. By this time, modernist architects had flocked to Southern California and developed a vocabulary for the modernist residential house type which included flat-roofs, open floor plans, integration of outdoor space with indoor space, and an orientation away from the street. For the program, John Entenza selected some of these local architects committed to the modernist movement to design and build low-cost and replicable single-family residences that would take advantage of the latest advances in construction methods, planning, materials, furnishings, landscape design, and living arrangements.

Overall, only thirty-five residences were published and the program did not produce the results Entenza hoped for. Due to increasing cost of materials, reluctance of banks to provide loans for modern houses, and the hesitance of developers to commit to the designs, very few projects were built and the Case Study Houses that were constructed remained singular architectural statements. Despite this, the impact of the program in the history of the built environment has proven to be profound and enduring. Some of the most influential Modernist buildings, including the 1945-1949 Eames House (Case Study #8) and Pierre Koenigs famous Case Study House #22, were built through this program by some of the foremost Modernist architects such as J.R. Davidson, Richard Neutra, Spaulding and Rex, Wurster and Bernardi, Ralph Rapson, and many more.

Case Study House #23C was constructed as part of a Triad developed in 1960 by the architectural firm of Edward Killingsworth, Jules Brady, and Waugh Smith. Two houses, #23A and #23C have been included in the multiple properties submission while the third house (#23B) has been altered beyond recognition and is therefore not included. The three adjacent single-family residences were intended to be the pilot project for a large tract of houses in La Jolla that was never realized. The chief objective for the Triad was to take advantage of planning multiple units and produce a master plan and building design that created a close relationship between the houses while still providing a sense of privacy through landscaping, orientation and placement of outdoor spaces. In order to maintain affordability, each of the Triad houses utilized common materials including wood post framing (with some steel), laminated wood beams, and concrete slab foundations. The three houses were featured in the March of 1961 *Arts & Architecture*

magazine. Additionally, the Triad of houses is featured under the Case Study House program in the San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement.

CRITERION C – 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.

Case Study House #23C at 2329 Rue de Anne is significant under National Register Criterion C for its association with master architecture firm Killingsworth, Brady, and Smith and for embodying the distinctive characteristics of residential architecture of the Modern Movement in California, and the Case Study House program in particular.

Case Study House #23C was built in 1960 and is the most simple design of the Triad. The house is one-story and is located on the south side of Rue de Anne directly across from #23A. The house features a simple rectangular plan bisected by the entry hall and is clad in fir boarding. The house's original 10 foot door is flanked by viewing windows and accessed by a brick walk up. Aluminum sliding doors are found throughout the house giving access to outdoor patios. The house also features a flat roof and a port-cochere that is located at the south end of the house.

Modifications to the house include a new fence that incorporates sheer glass separation screens with wood, a new concrete retaining wall at north side of property, glass windows and sliding doors have been tinted for privacy, the original small reflecting pool has been filled in, and the brick pavers at the entry walkway and garden appear to have been replaced. According to the report, in order to qualify for designation the subject house must maintain enough physical integrity to be readily identifiable as a contributor to the program. The report also notes that, “the filling in of reflecting ponds, the addition of perimeter walls for security or privacy, and modifications of the original landscaping will not disqualify buildings under Criterion C” (Section F, Page 33). Because the house is readily identifiable as a contributor to the program and retains a great deal of integrity from 1960, these minor modifications should not disqualify Case Study House #23C.

The Triad was built by master architecture firm, Killingsworth, Brady & Smith. The firm was founded in 1953 by Edward Killingsworth along with Jules Brady, and Waugh Smith in Long Beach California. The firm is known for a straightforward geometry with light, shade and reflective water basins playing a major role. The firm is also responsible for Case Study House #25 in Long Beach (1962), a block of the Kahala Hilton Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii (1964) and a number of other significant buildings in California. After the firms participation with the Kahala Hilton Hotel, hotel buildings became a focal point of their work.

The Case Study House program's experimental modernist housing designs use a vast array of traditional and new construction methods, materials, floor plans, fixtures, finishes, furnishings, and landscaping. Case Study Houses are made up of wood-frame or steel-frame construction and share the modern qualities of flat roofs, deep overhangs, open floor plans, extensive use of glass, indoor/outdoor flow, and concrete slab foundations. All houses in the program are designed by master architects, many of whom became nationally known because of their pioneering work

within the program. Overall, the Case Study House #23C located at 2329 Rue de Anne embodies the distinctive characteristics of residential architecture associated with the Modern Movement in California, and the Case Study House program in particular. Specifically, the house maintains its flat roof, extensive use of glass, indoor/outdoor flow, concrete slab foundation, modest size in keeping with the original tenets as presented in 1945, orientation towards the rear garden area, and original fir wood exterior cladding.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted, it is recommended that the Historic Resources Board forward a positive recommendation for Case Study House #23C located at 2329 Rue de Anne to be listed on the National Register of Historical Places under Criteria A and C with a period of significance of 1960.



Sarah Vonesh
Planning Intern



Cathy Winterrowd
Assistant Deputy Director/HRB Liaison

SV/jb/cw

Attachment:

1. Applicant's National Register of Historical Resources Nomination Report under separate cover