

# CITY LANDMARK ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION REPORT



January 2015

## KRONISH RESIDENCE

9439 Sunset Boulevard, City of Beverly Hills, CA

### Prepared for:

City of Beverly Hills  
Community Development Department  
Planning Division, Cultural Heritage Commission  
455 Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

### Prepared by:

Jan Ostashay Principal  
Peter Moruzzi, Architectural Historian  
Ostashay & Associates Consulting  
PO BOX 542, Long Beach, CA 90801

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APN: 4350-002-009

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This landmark assessment and evaluation report, completed by Ostashay & Associates Consulting for the City of Beverly Hills, documents and evaluates the local significance and landmark eligibility of the single parcel, single-family residence located at 9439 Sunset Boulevard, generally known as the Kronish Residence, within the City of Beverly Hills.

Included in the report is a discussion of the survey methodology used, a summarized description of the subject property and its integrity, a brief contextual history of the site and its associated architect, a discussion of the architectural style applied to the property, a review of the local landmark criteria considered in the evaluation process, a formal evaluation of the property for local significance, photographs, and applicable supporting materials.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The landmark assessment was conducted by Jan Ostashay, Principal, and Peter Moruzzi, Architectural Historian, of Ostashay & Associates Consulting. In order to identify and evaluate the subject property as a potential local landmark, an intensive-level survey was conducted. The assessment included a review of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and its annual updates, the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), and the California Historic Resources Inventory list maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) in order to determine if any previous evaluations or survey assessments of the property had been performed.

For this current landmark assessment a site inspection and a review of building permits and tax assessor records were conducted to document the property's existing condition and assist in evaluating the property for historical significance. The City of Beverly Hills landmark criteria were employed to evaluate the local significance of the site and its eligibility for landmark designation. In addition, the following tasks were performed for the study:

- Searched records of the National Register, California Register, and OHP Historic Resources Inventory.
- Conducted a field inspection of the subject property.
- Conducted site-specific archival background research on the subject property utilizing Sanborn fire insurance maps, city directories, newspaper articles, historical photographs, and building permits.

- Reviewed and analyzed ordinances, statutes, regulations, bulletins, and technical materials relating to federal, state, and local historic preservation, designation assessment procedures, and related programs.
- Evaluated the potential historic resource based upon criteria established by the City of Beverly Hills and utilized the OHP survey methodology for conducting survey assessments.

## **FINDINGS**

The Kronish Residence located on a single parcel with the address 9439 Sunset Boulevard appears to satisfy the City’s criteria for designation as a local Landmark as required in Section 10-3-3212 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (BHMC 10-3-3212 (A)(B)(C)). This property satisfies the mandates of subsection A., which requires that at least two of the six “significance” criteria be met. Upon conclusion of the assessment, the subject property appears to meet three of the “significance” criteria: criterion A.1, A.3, and A.4. It also meets the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(B), which requires that: “a property retains integrity from its period of significance,” and subsection 10-3-3212(C), which requires that: “a property has historic value.”

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The subject property is situated along the north side of Sunset Boulevard just east of Mountain Drive and west of Hillcrest Road. The parcel measures roughly 300 feet by roughly 245 with a 247-foot driveway that extends from Sunset Boulevard to the main parcel and residence. The property occupies lot 2 of Tract #17929 and has a generous setback from the public right-of-way. It is located within a well-developed residential neighborhood whose improvements, in the immediate area, primarily date from the mid-1920s, 1930s, and 1950s.

The property was meticulously rehabilitated in recent years (2012-2014) by the architectural firm Marmol Radziner of Los Angeles. The firm also designed a complementary but separate one-story guesthouse, remodeled the detached pool house in-kind, replaced and expanded the swimming pool, and installed compatible new landscape elements.

The subject property has been previously identified under the City’s on-going historic resources survey process. It was identified and recorded as part of the 1985-1986 city-wide historic resources survey. At that time, the property was identified as potentially historic due to its association with master architect Richard J. Neutra and its exemplary architectural significance. However, because it was less than fifty years old it at the time of evaluation the property was assigned a National Register Status Code (now referred to as the California Historical Resources Status Code) of 7N, indicating that it needs to be re-evaluated.

## **PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND CONSTRUCTION HISTORY**

**Description.** Located at the end of a long driveway off the north side of Sunset Boulevard, the single-family residence was designed by the noted modernist architect Richard J. Neutra for Herbert Kronish and his family. At approximately 7,000 square feet, the house, constructed in 1954, was among the largest of Neutra’s completed projects and one of only three Neutra-designed dwellings to be erected in Beverly Hills. The house reflects Neutra’s unique

amalgamation of International Style tenets with the Biorealist design philosophy that he had advanced in the mid-1950s. The overall composition is of a sprawling, low-slung villa of glass and stucco set amidst a subtropical forest.

The one-story Kronish Residence is pinwheel shape in plan and rests on a concrete foundation. Its roof is primarily flat except for the portion covering the broad south elevation where a shed roof with deep overhanging eaves shelters the living room, which opens to the patio and swimming pool. Extending from the eaves at this prominent location is a typical Neutra design element – a screen vent comprised of a fascia board attached by a row of slender pegs. Another Neutra touch found in many of his residential designs is the projecting post and beam support that extends past overhangs in forming a spider leg structural element. At the Kronish Residence, spider legs support the eaves over the south (primary, rear) elevation and the flat canopy covering the east portion of the entrance garden.

Exterior surfaces are primarily stucco. Enormous floor-to-ceiling, metal-framed fixed windows or sliding glass doors complement the numerous metal-framed casements that punctuate the dwelling on most elevations. The main entrance (primary elevation) is at the northeast inner “L” of the pinwheel. It is reached via concrete steps that lead down from a circular driveway space set at the far northeast corner of the parcel. To the left of the entrance hall is a long gallery that parallels the dining room and leads to the vast living room at the south end of the house. What distinguishes the composition in these key public areas is Neutra’s decision to place full height plate glass windows on three sides of a small, private landscaped garden in creating a personal terrarium effect visible from much of the house.

Originally, there were six bedrooms divided amongst the three branches of the pinwheel. The master bedroom with its adjacent his and hers dressing rooms is east of the living room. A later addition to the south end of this bedroom that was not documented in available building permits has recently been removed. In bringing this space back to its original design and dimensions under the recent rehabilitation work, missing windows and sliding glass doors were recreated and installed. Several modifications by the Kronish family in 1969 resulted in the enlargement of Mrs. Kronish’s dressing room, minor changes to the powder room, the removal of a built-in desk and light soffit from the master bedroom, and the removal of a short divider wall attached to the living room fireplace. The recent rehabilitation brought the dressing room back to its original footprint, replacing missing architectural elements in-kind.

In updating the dwelling’s mechanical elements, a new terrazzo floor was poured over a concrete topping slab containing pipes for radiant heating (an original feature of the house), and new unobtrusive ductwork and vents were installed for heating and air-conditioning that were previously lacking. As noted, much of the original glazing was replaced with single-pane tempered glass, metal-framed fixed and sliding glass doors repaired or replaced in-kind, and deteriorated interior finishes replaced with similar materials. A bar once located next to the fireplace at the entrance to the living room was also removed to create more space in this area. In the dwelling’s west wing a small galley kitchen and a pair of guest bedrooms were removed in creating one large updated kitchen space. Also, a 13-foot addition to the multi-car garage – which extends from the west wing – was made to accommodate staff living quarters.

Originally, the south elevation of the integrated garage was clad with opaque corrugated acrylic panels held in place by narrow wood battens. This cladding was recently replaced with opaque tempered glass panels also held in place by custom wood mullions. The color palette selected for the rehabilitated exterior and interior surfaces matches that of the original dark brown (for posts and beams) and creamy white (for stucco) chosen by Neutra for the house in 1954.

As part of the recent rehabilitation work, the original swimming pool was replaced with a longer pool of similar design, shape, and general appearance at the same location. Over the years a large poolside planter and the adjacent concrete steps leading from the living room patio had been replaced with a low elongated planter. Both the original planter and steps were recreated in concrete. A very small non-descript bathhouse structure built in 1956 that was near the southwest corner of the swimming pool was removed as part of the rehabilitation work. In addition, an outbuilding constructed in 1954 at the west end of the swimming pool was remodeled as a compatible freestanding guesthouse to accommodate guests, entertain, and provide a stunning vantage point from which to view Neutra’s architectural achievement.

As relates to landscaping, much of the property’s foliage was severely neglected or overgrown with few original plant materials having survived by the time the house was purchased by the current owner in 2011. Under the recent rehabilitation, a new landscaping plan was implemented comprised of lush subtropical plantings and scores of mature trees deliberately placed to shield the property from adjacent dwellings and road noise from Sunset Boulevard. However, in order to match the panorama as seen in Julius Shulman’s most evocative photograph of the residence taken from the southeast corner of the swimming pool, the picturesque tree near the patio spider leg and the original sloping lawn were recreated.

Other new elements include a rectangular shape shallow reflecting pool with a tall contemporary abstract bronze sculpture that centers the circular driveway near the main entrance of the house at the northeast corner of the parcel, and the exposed concrete aggregate surface of the driveway that replaced the original asphalt.

**Building Permit History.** A review of building permits and a visual inspection of the site confirms modifications to the interior and exterior of the residence, as discussed above. Relevant alterations that have been recorded with the City of Beverly Hills, include the following:

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<b>MO/YEAR</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR WORK</b>
Apr 1954	Construct new dwelling, bathhouse, + pool. 14 rooms, 4 baths, 2 fireplaces, 1 chimney, 6000 square feet, one story. Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Kronish. Architect: R.J. Neutra. Contractor: F.S. Marsh. (\$60,000)
Oct 1954	Swimming Pool. Owner: Herbert Kronish. Contractor: Paddock Pools, Inc. (\$3,000)
Oct 1954	Outbuilding. Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Kronish. Architect: R.J. Neutra. Contractor: F.S. Marsh. (\$700)

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Jun 1956	Bathroom. Owner: Herbert Kronish. Architect: R.J. Neutra. Contractor: F.S. Marsh. (\$4,200)
Mar 1969	Miscellaneous interior remodel work. Owner: Herbert Kronish. Plot plan and floor plan but no associated building permit.
Oct 1970	Add to Breakfast Room. Owner: Herbert Kronish. Architect not listed. Contractor: F.S. Marsh Co. (\$1,650)
Dec 1973	Deletion of col. at living room. Owner: Mr. & Mrs. Donald Simon. Architect: Buff & Hensman. Contractor: Owner (\$600)
Dec 1976	Furnace enclosure. Owner: Donald Simon. Architect: Buff & Hensman. Contractor: F.L. Ashley. (\$2,000)
Apr 1977	Remodel inside add wall to room guest house. Owner: Donald Simons [sic]. Architect not listed. Contractor: Norman "N" Leishman (\$5,000)
Jun 1977	Remodel existing pool. Constr. new spa. Owner: Mr. Donald Simon. Architect not listed. Contractor: Catalina Pools. (\$4,000)
Oct 2011	Demolish poolhouse (bathroom dating from 1956). Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Contractor: Marmol Radziner and Associates. (\$3,080)
Mar 2012	Addition and renovation to one-story single-family residence. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Architect: Leonardo Emilio Marmol. Contractor: Marmol Radziner and Associates. (\$2,000,000)
Mar 2012	Guest house – New accessory structure. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Architect: Marmol Radziner and Associates. Contractor: Marmol Radziner. (\$300,000)
Nov 2012	Water efficient landscape. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Contractor: Marmol Radziner and Associates. (\$152,500)
May 2013	Remodel outbuilding (dating from 1954). Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Architect: Leonardo Emilio Marmol. Contractor: Marmol Radziner and Associates. (\$50,000)
Jun 2013	Demolish pool. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Architect: Marmol Radziner, Inc. Contractor: Artech Construction. (\$5,000)
Jun 2013	New swimming pool. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Architect: Marmol Radziner, Inc. Contractor: Artech Construction. (\$70,000)
Sep 2013	Water feature and reflecting pond. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Architect: David Peterson. Contractor: Watershape Consulting, Inc. (\$20,000)
Dec 2013	Water efficient landscape – Phase II. Owner: Hestia Properties LLC. Contractor: Marmol Radziner and Associates. (\$750,000)

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With the recent rehabilitation work completed, the property retains much of its original architectural design intent and important character-defining features.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Beverly Hills

The early settlement and development of Beverly Hills began on what was called Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas. This land was originally claimed by Mexican settlers Maria Rita Valdez and her husband Vicente Valdez around 1822. Aptly named The Ranch of the Gathering of the Waters, the swamps or “cienegas” that characterize the natural landscape were created by rain run off flowing out of Coldwater and Benedict Canyons. Vegetable farming, sheep herding, bee keeping and the raising of walnut trees were the primary agricultural activities within the rancho lands during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Several attempts at subdividing and establishing communities on the ranch lands were attempted during the 1860s and 1880s, but ended in failure.<sup>1</sup>

In 1906, the Amalgamated Oil Company reorganized as the Rodeo Land and Water Company. Burton Green played a leading role in formulating the plans for a garden city, located between Whittier Drive on the west, Doheny Drive on the east, Wilshire Boulevard on the south, and the foothills above Sunset Boulevard to the north.<sup>2</sup> The syndicate hired notable California park planner, Wilbur F. Cook, Jr., to plan the new community. Cook had worked with landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted prior to moving to Oakland in 1905 to establish his own firm. Comprised of “Beverly” in the commercial triangle between Santa Monica and Wilshire boulevards and “Beverly Hills” north of Santa Monica Boulevard, the new community was one of the earliest planned communities in southern California.

In 1914, concern over establishment of a secure water system and the desire to improve the local school system prompted incorporation of the City of Beverly Hills. The original boundaries of the City were much the same as they are today, except for the area south of Wilshire Boulevard, annexed in 1915, and Trousdale Estates, annexed in 1955. Most of the City was open land at the time of incorporation with development scattered around Canon Drive, Beverly Drive, Crescent Drive, and the downtown triangle.<sup>3</sup>

The architecture of Beverly Hills in the years following the City’s founding was dominated by the Craftsman, Mission Revival, and Period Revival styles (Tudor, Georgian, Beaux-Arts Classicism). With Beverly Hills establishing itself as a haven for movie stars in the 1920s, the architectural character of the city began to realize a varying degree of extravagance in the design of its housing stock. Flamboyant art directors and producers showed how delightful the art of set decoration could be applied to real life. Hence, fanciful houses such as Pickfair, Dias Dorados, and Greenacres were built. Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s sophisticated period revival styles dominated both the domestic and commercial architecture of the city. By the mid to late 1930s Beverly Hills became one of the areas in southern California most closely connected with the development of the Hollywood Regency style. Born of the meeting of Moderne sleekness with the elegance of early nineteenth century architectural forms, it used

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<sup>1</sup> *Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey 1985-1986*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

simple, primary forms and blank wall surfaces to project exclusivity and sophistication.<sup>4</sup> Beverly Hills' architecture in the post-World War II era saw the incorporation of Revival references in its new building stock, and also the introduction of contemporary, luxury designs reflective of the International Style, Miesian, and Midcentury Modern idiom. These modern or "contemporary" styles dominated the commercial, banking, and office buildings constructed throughout much of the City in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly along Wilshire Boulevard and within the downtown commercial triangle area. In addition, some forward-looking residents commissioned houses by noted modernist architects, the most senior and arguably most respected of which was Richard J. Neutra who designed the subject Kronish Residence in 1954. During the 1960s and 1970s, the City's downtown urbanization continued until the westernmost section of the downtown area was as densely developed as any other southern California office cluster outside of downtown Los Angeles.<sup>5</sup>

**Kronish Residence, 9439 Sunset Boulevard.** The subject property was built in 1954 for Herbert and Hazel Kronish on a nearly two-acre parcel at the end of a long driveway off of Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills. Herbert Kronish (1913-1971) was a successful real estate developer who purchased the property in 1953 with his second wife Hazel (1924-1994) from actress Shirley Temple. The existing Temple residence was soon demolished to make room for the couple's new dwelling to be designed by architect Richard Neutra. Of their decision to hire the famed modernist, Neutra scholar Barbara Lamprecht writes,

"Neutra seemed to be an odd choice for this couple – in a 14 October 1953 letter they stated that they didn't want a design that looked like a wooden box, they didn't like flat roofs (or even shed roofs), and they didn't want radiant heating or sliding doors. In any case, they went ahead. The result is a very formal, pin-wheel shaped, one-story villa (with radiant floor heating) exhibiting a very different perception of nature's role: Here nature is no longer an equal and possibly unpredictable partner but thoroughly tamed and cleaned up. For example, at the entrance a landscaped garden is technically "inside" the house but is confined to a "fish bowl" of glass."<sup>6</sup>

In documenting Herbert Kronish's background, current research reveals that he was a prolific developer of residential and commercial real estate. In 1953, when he purchased the subject property, Kronish was the president of Continental Construction Corporation, which had just announced plans to build 128 single-family residences in northern Reno.<sup>7</sup> That same year he constructed an office building in the Miracle Mile district of Los Angeles.<sup>8</sup> In 1954, the year that the subject property was completed, Kronish opened the sprawling Balboa Vista Freedom Homes tract in Costa Mesa, California. He was described at the time as having "built and sold thousands of similar homes all over the country, including Las Vegas, Reno, Bakersfield, Miami,

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<sup>4</sup> *Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey 1985-1986*. p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Lamprecht, Barbara. "Neutra: Complete Works." *Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2000*. p. 288.

<sup>7</sup> *Reno Evening Gazette*, "Home Project Is Announced," February 2, 1953. p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *The Citizen*, "New Miracle Mile Building Slated at Half-Million Cost," September 10, 1953. p. 2.

[and] Texas.”<sup>9</sup> A few years later, Kronish was known for “building shopping centers and other community projects from California to Washington D.C.”<sup>10</sup> In 1964, he was also a part owner of the Beverly Hills Hotel located a few blocks from his Sunset Boulevard residence. It appears that Kronish remained active as a developer until his death in 1971.

As relates to the subject property under the ownership of the Kronish family, the only documented modification was a 1969 addition to the north elevation of the bedroom and bathroom adjacent to the glass-enclosed entrance garden. Following Herbert Kronish’s death two years later in 1971, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Donald Simon. Building permits suggest that they owned the home until at least 1977. However, Beverly Hills city directories indicate that Mr. Fordyce S. Marsh (1909-2002), who was a contractor by trade [retired] and the initial contractor who worked with Neutra on the construction of the subject property, resided at the address from 1972 until at least 1980.

Under the Simon’s ownership there were only a few minor alterations identified in building permits. However, there was an undocumented addition to the south elevation of the master bedroom that could have occurred under any of the dwelling’s owners. By the time the house was purchased by the current owner in 2011 it had been unoccupied for a number of years, its condition having severely suffered from neglect.

**Richard J. Neutra, Architect.** Richard Joseph Neutra was a prominent and widely influential Modern architect who practiced globally for over fifty years. Neutra was born in Vienna, Austria in 1892. He studied architectural engineering at the Institute of Technology and graduated in 1918. He attended the University of Zurich in Switzerland for his post-graduate studies until 1919. After World War I, Neutra worked in Germany briefly with architect Erich Mendelsohn before immigrating to the United States in 1923. After a brief stay in New York, he arrived in the Chicago area where he briefly worked for Frank Lloyd Wright before relocating to California, where he worked for the remainder of his career. In Los Angeles, he initially collaborated with fellow Vienna native and modernist, Rudolph Schindler. In 1949, Neutra and fellow architect Robert E. Alexander established a partnership dedicated to project planning and of public and commercial architecture. Together they were responsible for planning and designing many high-profile projects throughout California. The partnership ended in 1960 due to personal differences. Neutra then established a new firm – Neutra and Associates – with his son Dion Neutra, who continued the practice after his father’s death in 1970.

Richard Neutra’s architectural style was distinctly Modern, but with an emphasis on organic lines, natural materials, and integration of the outdoors. Neutra coined his philosophy of architecture “Biorealism” because of his insistence that Modern architecture be humanistic and recognize the client’s needs for comfort and aesthetic pleasure. He wrote, “Quite simply, our habits, moods, efficiency, and health are intimately related to our habitations.”<sup>11</sup> Neutra’s later work evolved to project a warmer and more relaxed character compared to his earlier projects that were the embodiment of the International Style. His focus on the concept of transparency,

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<sup>9</sup> *Long Beach Independent Press Telegram*, “Kronish Opens Tract Overlooking Newport Harbor,” May 16, 1954. p. B12.

<sup>10</sup> *Reno Evening Gazette*, “New Development Starts on Property Near Verdi,” August 10, 1956. p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Marlin, William (ed), “Nature Near, Late Essays of Richard Neutra,” Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1989. p. 5.*

distortion of visual indoor and outdoor spatial relationships, and the refinement of his trademark “spider leg” outriggings were well incorporated into many of his later works.

Richard Neutra’s signature works include Modern residences in California, such as the Lovell Health House built in Los Angeles from 1927 to 1929; housing projects designed for the Federal Housing Authority from 1945; and several Case Study Houses designed and built from 1945 to 1948 in partnership with *Arts and Architecture* magazine in an effort that included other notable Modern architects such as Charles Eames, Eero Saarinen, Whitney R. Smith, Rodney Walker, Craig Ellwood, Edward Killingsworth, and Pierre Koenig. In addition to homes, Neutra, some in partnership with Alexander, designed many distinguished public buildings, including the Channel Heights housing project in San Pedro, 1932; the Los Angeles Hall of Records, 1961-1962; the U.S. Embassy in Karachi, Pakistan, 1961; and many educational facilities such as the Kester-Avenue Elementary School in Los Angeles, 1951.

Neutra influenced numerous young architects through his role as an educator at Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Illinois Institute of Technology, and other colleges and universities. Additionally, through the course of his career Neutra published many books including “Architecture of Social Concern,” 1948; “Mystery and Realities of the Site,” 1951; “Survival Through Design,” 1954; “Richard Neutra-Mensch Und Wohnen,” 1956; “Life & Human Habitat,” 1956; and “Realismo Biologico,” 1958.

Richard J. Neutra is considered one of the world’s most influential modern architects. His innovative and open plan designs express the freedom from conventions associated with southern California. In 1949 he was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine and hailed for having humanized modern architecture. In 1955, the Richard Neutra archive was established at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1977 he was posthumously awarded the AIA’s highest honor, the Gold Medal.

Examples of Neutra’s residential work can be found throughout southern California, particularly in the Los Angeles districts of Los Feliz, Silver Lake, the Hollywood Hills, and the West Side. However, a surprising number of Neutra-designed dwellings have been demolished or substantially altered. Of those of the scale and precision of the Kronish Residence, the 2002 demolition of the 1962 Maslon House in Rancho Mirage is perhaps the most notorious. In Beverly Hills, Neutra designed three dwellings in addition to the Kronish Residence: the Heller House (1952) and the Stern House (1968) at 811 and 621 North Camden Drive, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Both have since been demolished. As a result, the subject property is the last remaining example of Neutra’s work in the City of Beverly Hills.

**International Style and Biorealism.** European modernist tenets established in the 1920s stressed a universality of design freed from historical references. Under this philosophy, a building designed according to the principles of the modern movement, whether it be residential, commercial, institutional, or any other building type, would succeed wherever it was placed. The pre-World War II designs of European master architects Le Corbusier, Walter

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<sup>12</sup> Several Neutra-designed dwellings variously identified as being located in Beverly Hills are actually not within the city limits. They are: Sinay House (1861 Heather Ct.), Rourke House (9228 Hazen Dr.), Cyton House (2249 Benedict Cyn. Dr.), Levitt House (1705 Summitridge Dr.).

Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe illustrated this philosophy, which was dubbed the “International Style” because the architectural designs arising from the movement would be suitable anywhere in the world.<sup>13</sup>

International Style buildings express the tenets of form following function and a rejection of applied ornamentation. Compositionally, a balance of unlike parts is often substituted for symmetry. Character-defining features include flat roofs, smooth and uniform exterior surfaces, large expanses of glass, minimal overhangs, and cantilevered elements. Skeleton construction of steel or reinforced concrete is typical, especially for larger buildings. Rectilinearity predominates. In the United States, the first International Style buildings were the Lovell Health House of 1928 in Los Angeles by subject property architect Richard Neutra, and the Aluminaire House of 1931 in New York.

The subject Kronish Residence is International Style in inspiration with its pronounced horizontality, primarily flat roof, open floor plan, extensive use of glazing, and lack of applied exterior ornamentation. In addition, the house exhibits character-defining features associated with Neutra’s philosophy of Biorealism. Such features as the integration of indoors and outdoors via large expanses of floor-to-ceiling fixed and sliding glass windows, and the generous application of natural materials for exterior and interior finishes. In addition, Neutra developed several distinctive architectural elements that he incorporated into many of his postwar houses: a screen vent comprised of a fascia board attached by a row of slender pegs projecting from a deep overhang, and prominent spider leg post and beam supports. The Kronish Residence incorporates all of these elements in one outstanding composition.

## **EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**Evaluation Criteria.** In analyzing the historical significance of the subject property, criteria for designation under the City’s local landmark program was considered. Additionally, consideration of historical integrity and the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) survey methodology was used to survey and assess the relative significance of the property.

**City of Beverly Hills Landmark Criteria.** The City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Title 10 Chapter 3 Article 32; BHMC 10-3-32) authorizes the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) to recommend the nomination of properties as local landmarks to the City Council. The Council may designate local landmarks and historic districts by the procedures outlined in the ordinance.

The Preservation Ordinance also establishes criteria and the process for evaluating and designating properties as potential local landmarks. Under the City’s criteria a property must be more than 45 years old, unless it possesses exceptional significance; retain sufficient historical integrity to physically illustrate its significance; and satisfy significance criteria.

To be eligible for local designation as a historic landmark, properties must satisfy the following criteria:

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<sup>13</sup> *Curators Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson coined the term “International Style” when describing the progressive architecture of the modern movement that they featured at the Museum of Modern Art’s seminal International Exhibition of Modern Architecture held in 1932.*

- A. The property meets at least two of the following (significance) criteria:
1. Is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the Nation, State, City, or community;
  2. Is directly associated with the lives of Significant Persons important to national, state, City or local history;
  3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction;
  4. Represents a notable work of a person included on the City's List of Master Architects or possesses high artistic or aesthetic value;
  5. Has yielded or has the potential to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the Nation, State, City or community;
  6. Is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.
- B. The property retains integrity from its period of significance. The proposed landmark retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. Integrity shall be judged with reference to the particular significance criteria specified above.
- C. The property has historic value. The proposed landmark is of significant architectural value to the community, beyond its simple market value and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate, and necessary to promote protect, and further the goals and purposes of the City's historic preservation ordinance.

**California Office of Historic Preservation Survey Methodology.** The evaluation instructions and classification system prescribed by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) in its publication Instructions for Recording Historical Resources provide a three-digit evaluation rating code for use in classifying potential historic resources. The first digit indicates one of the following general evaluation categories for use in conducting cultural resources surveys:

1. Property listed in the National Register or the California Register;
2. Property determined eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register;
3. Property appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through a survey evaluation;
4. Property appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through other evaluation;
5. Property recognized as historically significant by local government;

6. Property not eligible for any listing or designation; and
7. Property not evaluated for the National Register or California Register or needs re-evaluation.

The second digit of the evaluation status code is a letter code indicating whether the resource is separately eligible (S), eligible as part of a district (D), or both (B). The third digit is a number that is used to further specify significance and refine the relationship of the property to the National Register and/or California Register. Under this evaluation system, categories 1 through 4 pertain to various levels of National Register and/or California Register eligibility. The California Register, however, may also include surveyed resources with evaluation rating codes through level 5. In addition, properties found ineligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, or for designation under a local ordinance are given an evaluation status code of 6.

**Historical Integrity.** “Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance.” In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. Integrity is the authenticity of a property’s physical identity clearly indicated by the retention of characteristics that existed during the property’s period of significance. Properties eligible for local landmark designation must meet at least two of the local landmark designation criteria and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their historical significance.

Both the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources recognize the seven aspects of qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property should possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. The seven qualities that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The seven qualities or aspects of historical integrity are defined as follows:

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling is a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a

historic property.

**Application of City Landmark (Significance) Criteria.** In summary, based on current research and the above assessment the Kronish Residence appears to meet the necessary City of Beverly Hills Landmark criteria (BHMC 10-3-3212).

The property was evaluated according to statutory criteria, as follows:

A. The property meets at least two of the following criteria (BHMC 10-3-3212(A)).

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(1)*** *The property is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the Nation, State, City, or community.*

At over 7,000 square feet, the subject property was one of master architect Richard Neutra's largest residential commissions of the postwar period. Within the Beverly Hills city limits, the Kronish Residence is the only Neutra-designed dwelling remaining in the city, the other two having since been demolished. As a result of the high quality and precision of the dwelling's recent rehabilitation – particularly of its exterior elevations – the house is a significant contributor to the modernist architectural history of the City. This contribution is physically manifested and exemplified through the dwelling's elegant fusion of the key elements associated with Neutra's architectural style as rendered on a grand scale. These include broad horizontality, a flat and low pitched shed roof, deep overhangs, wide expanses of glazing, and an open floor plan. Perhaps most dramatically, the central landscaped garden visible through windows facing the entrance hall, gallery, and living room illustrates Neutra's strong belief in bringing the outdoors in. The house also prominently features Neutra's trademark spider leg post and beam supports, and projecting screen vent at the poolside patio. With its emphasis on organic lines, natural materials, and integration of the outdoors, the Kronish Residence embodies Neutra's modernist philosophy of Biorealism that he advanced in the 1950s. Therefore, upon review and consideration the subject property appears to satisfy this criterion.

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(2)*** *The property is directly associated with the lives of Significant Persons important to national, state, City or local history.*

While Herbert Kronish was a successful developer of commercial and residential real estate during the years he commissioned and owned the subject property, it does not appear that he would be considered a significant person important to national, state, City or local history. In addition, no evidence was uncovered to suggest that any of the subsequent owners or occupants of the dwelling were noted, prominent citizens important to national, state, City or local history. Therefore, the subject property does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(3)*** *The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction.*

The Kronish Residence – superb in composition, elegant in style – fully embodies Richard Neutra’s modernist architectural style as applied to a sizeable dwelling in Beverly Hills. The house incorporates the key design features associated with the International Style: a horizontal profile, primarily flat roof, open floor plan, broad expanses of glazing, and absence of applied ornamentation. It also exemplifies Neutra’s philosophy of Biorealism as articulated in the abundance of floor-to-ceiling fixed and sliding glass windows, use of luxurious natural materials and finishes, and the embrace of nature as revealed in the glass-enclosed garden visible from public areas of the house. In addition, the house incorporates Neutra’s trademark architectural elements: deep overhanging eaves, spider leg post and beam supports, and prominent screen vent projecting from the fascia. As a result, the subject property satisfies this criterion.

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(4) The property represents a notable work of a person included on the City’s List of Master Architects or possesses high artistic or aesthetic value.***

Richard Joseph Neutra is a world renowned master architect known as the modernist’s Modernist.<sup>14</sup> Neutra’s residential designs from the late 1920s until his death in 1970 greatly influenced several generations of architects, particularly in Southern California where the majority of his work resides. His clients’ budgets ranged from exceptionally modest to extremely generous, with the subject Kronish Residence closer to the latter. However, over the decades many Neutra-designed houses have been demolished or substantially altered. As a result, there remain only a handful of his dwellings that are both expansive and retain a high level of physical integrity. Following its recent rehabilitation, the Kronish Residence is one such example – and the only remaining Neutra-designed dwelling in Beverly Hills. It is a notable work that fully illustrates Neutra’s architectural philosophy. In consideration of the subject property’s association with Richard Neutra who appears on the City’s List of Master Architects, this significance criterion appears satisfied.

The property also satisfies this criterion for its aesthetic value as it so eloquently expresses the classic expression and features of the modernist design theories of the International Style.

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(5) The property has yielded or has the potential to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the Nation, State, City or community.***

The subject property does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(6) The property is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.***

The subject property is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources, nor has it been formally determined eligible for listing on the National Register or the California Register. The subject property, therefore, does not satisfy this criterion.

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<sup>14</sup> Lamprecht, Barbara. “Neutra: Complete Works.” Taschen: Cologne, Germany. 2000. p.42.

B. The property retains integrity from its Period of Significance (BHMC 10-3-3212(B)).

The period of significance for the subject property is 1954-1956, when the Kronish Residence and its swimming pool and pool house were completed. Following its recent rehabilitation work completed on the property, the dwelling's overall integrity is such that the property clearly conveys its historical and architectural significance. In returning the main house to its original configuration, inappropriate additions were removed, and missing or damaged fenestration and hardware elements were recreated and installed. Interior surfaces were also refinished or replaced in-kind, new terrazzo flooring poured, glazing exchanged for tempered glass, and the kitchen remodeled for contemporary use. As a result, through careful restoration and recreation of essential physical features, the integrity of the dwelling's design, materials, and workmanship is now evident. Additionally, the house is at its original location, remains a single-family residence, and its overall setting of lush landscaping has been reestablished. Further, the residence looks and feels like the masterwork of famed modernist architect Richard Neutra that it was 60 years ago. Therefore, the property satisfies this criterion.

C. The property has Historic Value (BHMC 10-3-3212 (C)).

Because of the property's architectural merit, key design features, and association with master architect Richard Neutra, the site is considered to have significant historic value to the local community. Therefore, the property appears to satisfy this criterion.

**Character-defining Features.** Every historic property is unique, with its own identity and its own distinguishing character. A property's form and detailing are important in defining its visual historic character and significance. It is a property's tangible features or elements that embody its significance for association with specific historical events, important personages, or distinctive architecture and it is those tangible elements; therefore, that should be retained and preserved.

Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic property. According to *National Park Service Brief 17, Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*, character-defining features include the overall shape of a property (building, structure, etc.), its material, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features (as applicable), as well as the various aspects of its site and immediate environment (form, configuration and orientation).

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* defines historic character by the form and detailing of materials, such as masonry, wood, stucco, plaster, terra cotta, metal, etc.; specific features, such as roofs, porches, windows and window elements, moldings, staircases, chimneys, driveways, garages, landscape and hardscape elements, etc.; as well as spatial relationships between buildings, structures, and features; room configurations; and archaic structural and mechanical systems. Identifying those features or elements that give a historic property visual character and which should be taken into account and preserved to the maximum extent possible is important in order for the property to maintain its historical significance.

The key features associated with the subject property that are visible and evident include, but are not limited to its form, massing, scale, proportion, orientation, height, materials, and general design scheme; and those physical attributes that define the property's type and style (a modern residence combining the International Style with Neutra's Biorealist architectural philosophy and distinctive design elements). In particular, the dwelling's character-defining features include its pinwheel footprint, horizontality, flat roof with a shed roof element, open floor plan, broad expanses of floor-to-ceiling fixed and sliding glass windows, lack of historical references, indoor-outdoor sensibility, use of natural materials for interior and exterior finishes, projecting screen vent, and spider leg post and beam supports.

## **CONCLUSION**

As discussed above, the property at 9439 Sunset Boulevard appears to meet the City of Beverly Hill's criteria for local landmark designation, as required in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (BHMC Section 10-3-3212).

The property satisfies the requirement of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(1), in that it "exemplifies important elements of the City's cultural, economic, and architectural history." The Kronish Residence is an important modernist work designed by noted master architect Richard J. Neutra. The property is exemplary of its style, period of construction, and property type; and occupies a significant place in the post-War architectural heritage of Beverly Hills.

The property also satisfies the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(3), in that it "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction." The Kronish Residence embodies the distinguishing features of the International Style combined with Neutra's Biorealist approach to architecture and his trademark design elements. Following its recent rehabilitation, the subject property is among the few large Neutra-designed dwellings retaining integrity in Southern California, and the only remaining of the handful of residences he designed in the City of Beverly Hills.

And finally, under the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(4), the subject property satisfies this criterion in that it "represent[s] a notable work of a person included on the City's List of Master Architects." The architect responsible for designing the Kronish Residence was Richard Neutra, one of America's most renowned modernists.

The Kronish Residence also satisfies the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(B) in that it retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical, architectural, and artistic significance. Further, because of the property's architectural merit and association with master architect Richard Neutra, under BHMC 10-3-3212 subsection 10-3-3212(C), the site is considered to have significant historic value to the local community. Therefore, the property appears to satisfy this criterion.

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Beverly Hills Public Library Archive Files

Building Permits and Files

## APPENDIX

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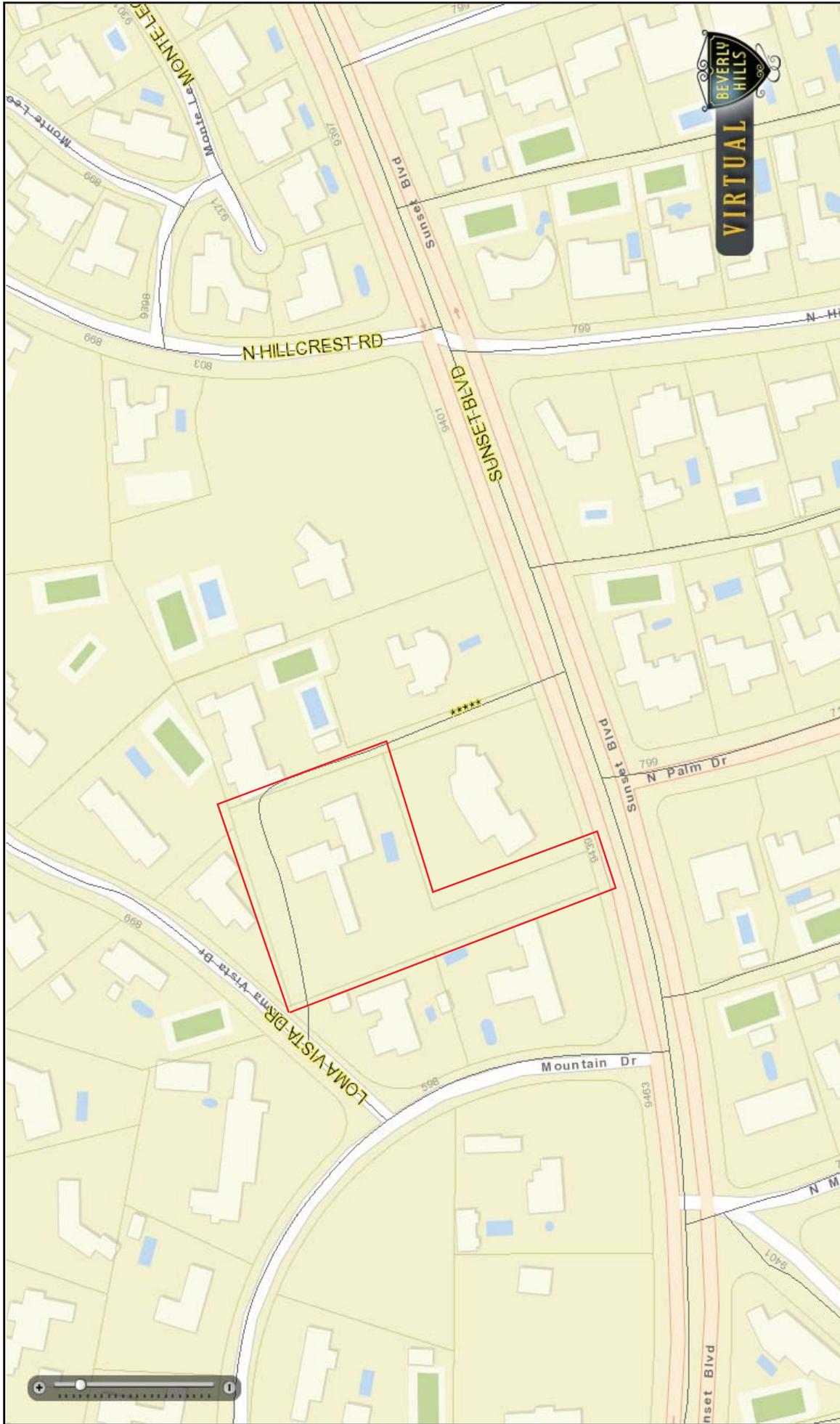
Location Map

Tax Assessor Map

Photographs (historical)

Ephemeral Material

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9439 Sunset Boulevard

# Location Map

Author: OAC

Date: 4 January 2015



42

84 m

Projection: Web Mercator

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21

42 m

Projection: Web Mercator

Author: OAC

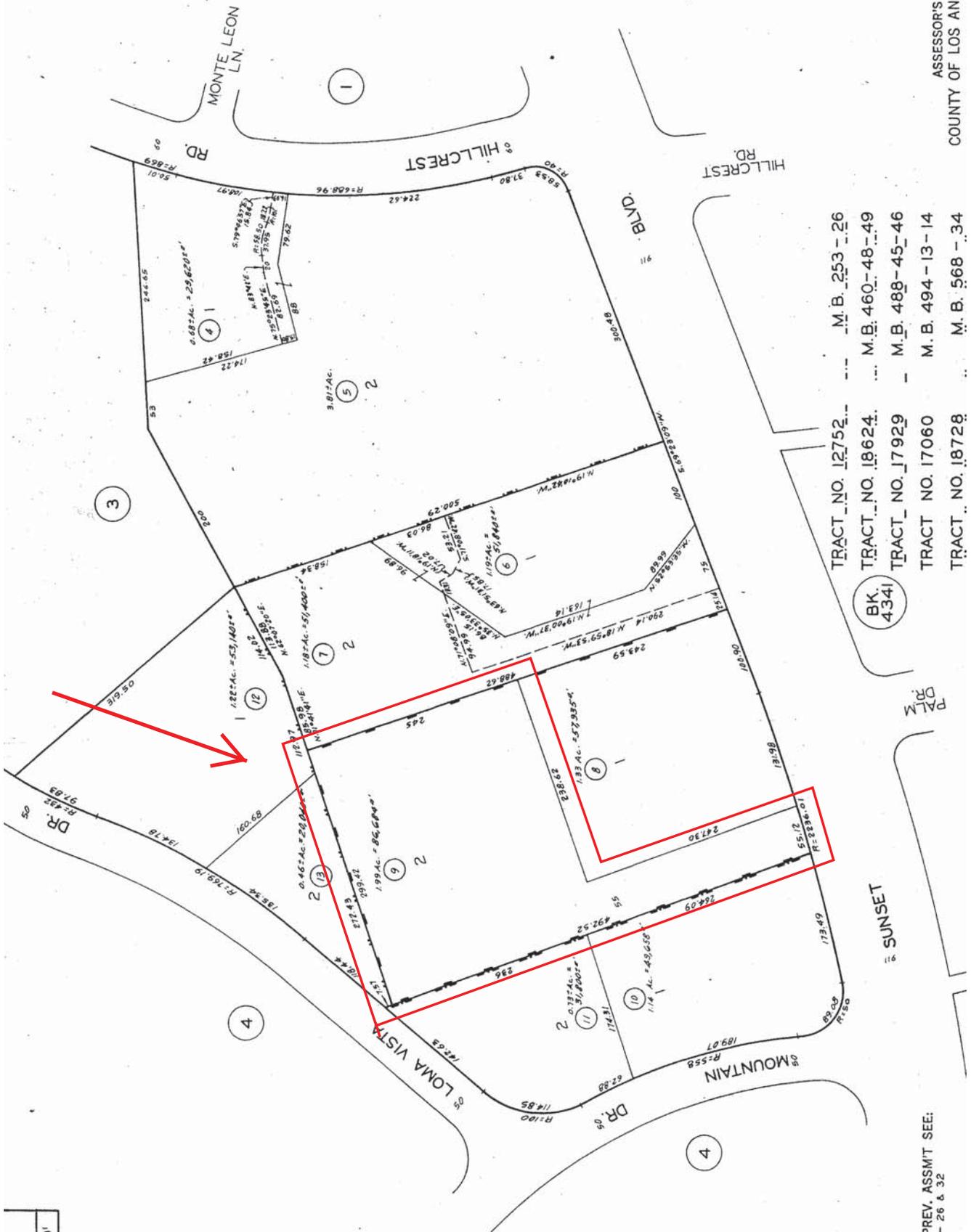
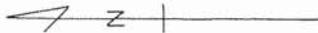
Date: 4 January 2015

9439 Sunset Boulevard

# Aerial Location Map.pdf



4350 | 2  
 SCALE 1" = 100'



CODE  
 2410

FOR PREV. ASSM'T SEE:  
 4349 - 26 & 32

- TRACT NO. 12752 --- M.B. 253 - 26
- TRACT NO. 18624 --- M.B. 460 - 48 - 49
- TRACT NO. 17929 --- M.B. 488 - 45 - 46
- TRACT NO. 17060 --- M.B. 494 - 13 - 14
- TRACT NO. 18728 --- M.B. 568 - 34

BK.  
 4341

ASSESSOR'S MAP  
 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

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*NOTE: At the request of the property owner, current photographs of the property have not been provided in this document. The following images are courtesy of the Julius Shulman Photography Archives, The Getty Research Institute, and Lamprecht Architextural (barbaralamprecht.com) web blog.*



**PHOTO - 1: South elevation of Kronish House with swimming pool in foreground (c.1955)**



**PHOTO - 2: Exterior entry foyer and adjacent garden area (east elevation), looking southwest (c.1955)**



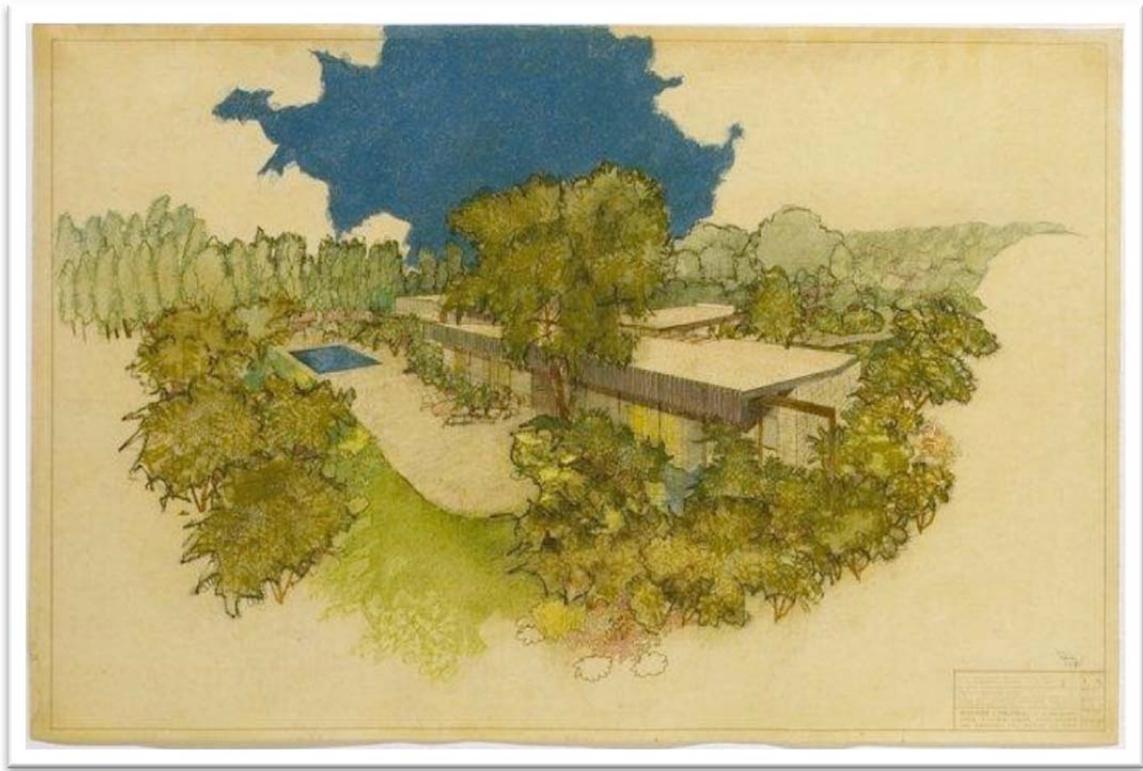
**PHOTO - 3: Interior entry foyer and adjacent privacy garden, looking east (c.1955)**



**PHOTO - 4: Living room view (right) with exterior deck and pool area (left), looking west (c.1955)**



**PHOTO - 5: Early rendering (looking northeast), Richard J. Neutra, Kronish Residence (1953)**



**PHOTO - 6: Early rendering (looking northwest), Richard J. Neutra, Kronish Residence (1953)**

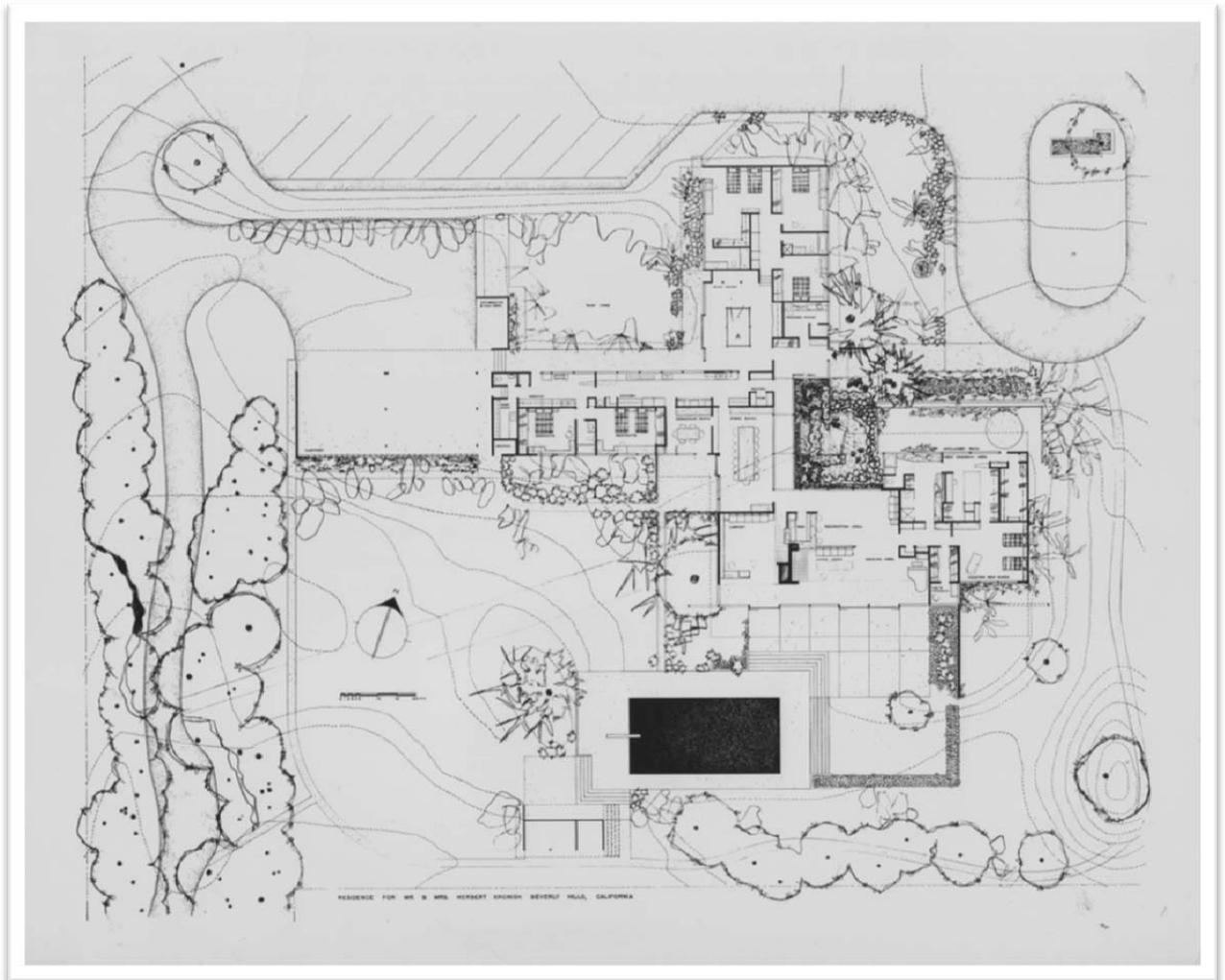


PHOTO - 7: Initial floor plan, Kronish Residence (nd)

**OSTASHAY & ASSOCIATES CONSULTING**

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PO BOX 542

LONG BEACH, CA 90801

562.500.9451