

CITY OF ARCADIA

Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Agenda



Tuesday, October 8, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with a disability who require a disability related modification or accommodation in order to participate in a meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, may request such modification or accommodation from Planning Services at (626) 574-5423. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to the meeting.

根据《美国残障人法案》的规定，需要提供残障相关调整或便利设施才能参加会议的残障人士（包括辅助器材或服务），可向规划服务部请求获得此类调整或便利设施。电话号码 (626) 574-5423。请在会前 48 小时通知规划服务部，以便作出合理安排，确保顺利参加会议。

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根据阿凯迪亚市的语言便利服务政策，英语能力有限并需要翻译服务才能参加会议的人可与市书记官办公室联系（电话：626-574-5455），请求提供志愿或专业翻译服务，请至少在会前 72 小时提出请求。

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Marilynne Wilander, Chair
Domenico Tallerico, Vice Chair
David Arvizu, Board Member
Angela Hui, Board Member
Vincent Tsoi, Board Member

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FROM STAFF REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENTS (5 minute time limit per person)

Each speaker is limited to five (5) minutes per person, unless waived by the Historic Preservation Commission. Under the Brown Act, the Commission or Board Members are prohibited from discussing or taking action on any item not listed on the posted agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING

All interested persons are invited to appear at a public hearing and to provide evidence or testimony concerning any of the proposed items set forth below for consideration. Separate and apart from the applicant (who may speak longer at the discretion of the Commission) speakers shall be limited to **five (5) minutes per person**. The applicant may additionally submit rebuttal comments, at the discretion of the Commission.

You are hereby advised that should you desire to legally challenge in court or in an administrative proceeding any action taken by the City Council regarding any public hearing item, you may be limited to raising only those issues and objections you or someone else raised at the public hearing or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing.

1. **Resolution No. 2156** – Review of Historical Landmark No. HL 24-01 to designate the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House that was designed by the Master Architect Richard Neutra as a historical landmark with a categorical exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) at 1203 Oakwood Drive
CEQA: Exempt
Recommendation: Adopt Resolution No. 2156 Recommending that the City Council Approve the Historical Landmark

Applicant: Chris Karlen

There is a ten day appeal period. Appeals are to be filed by 5:30 p.m. on Monday, October 21, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

The Historic Preservation Commission will adjourn and bring this meeting to a close.



STAFF REPORT

Development Services Department

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Honorable Chair and Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Lisa L. Flores, Deputy Development Services Director
By: Edwin Arreola, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. 2156 – REVIEW OF HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. HL 24-01 TO DESIGNATE THE EARLE L. AND MADY G. BROD HOUSE THAT WAS DESIGNED BY THE MASTER ARCHITECT RICHARD NEUTRA AS A HISTORICAL LANDMARK WITH A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) AT 1203 OAKWOOD DRIVE

CEQA: Exempt

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution No. 2156 Recommending that the City Council Approve the Historical Landmark

SUMMARY

The Applicant and Property Owner, Chris Karlen, is requesting that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval to the City Council of Historical Landmark No. HL 24-01 and designate the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House (“Brod House”) that was designed by a notable Master Architect, Richard Neutra, as a historical landmark at the local level. It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission find this landmark designation is categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and adopt Resolution No. 2156 (Attachment No. 1) recommending that the City Council approve the historical landmark designation.

BACKGROUND

The subject property is an 18,988 square foot corner lot that is located at the northwest corner of Oakwood Drive and E. Sycamore Avenue in the Highlands Homeowners’ Association – refer to Figure 1 below and Attachment No. 2 for an aerial photo and zoning information. The site has a 2,113 square foot single-story Mid-Century Modern house with an attached two-car garage that was designed in 1948 and completed in 1949. The site has decorative landscaping and mature growth trees, including two oak trees, a screened garden room, and a swimming pool around the northeast corner of the house.



Figure 1 – Aerial of Subject Site

In regard to the history of the area, the Highlands Homeowners' Association area was first developed in the 1920's as a highly exclusive community with large lots that had restrictions on developments. Following World War II, additional lots were subdivided and many homes were constructed during this time. Many of the homes in the area were predominantly designed as single-story, Ranch style homes but Mid-Century Modernism became popular by the mid-40's and the Brod House was one of the few examples of Modern style homes built in this area in 1949.

The Brod House was designed by the notable Master Architect, Richard Neutra. Richard Neutra was an Austrian-born architect that was considered one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century. Neutra's works are considered master examples of Mid-Century Modern architecture and typically incorporate designs that feature traditional Modern elements such as flat roofs, long, horizontal profiles, post-and-beam construction, casement windows, and glass walls that connect the interior and exterior settings. After relocating to Los Angeles in 1925, Neutra proceeded to design various Mid-Century Modern style residences throughout Southern California. Mid-Century Modern homes were popular throughout Southern California until the end of the 1960's. They are characterized by their clean, simple lines, long and horizontal exterior walls, flat roofs, use of simple materials such as stucco and glass, exposed beams, and built-in furniture on the interior.

The subject property has been owned by five separate owners. Earle and Mady Brod were the original owners of the residence and commissioned Richard Neutra to design the home. The Brod's owned the home until Mady Brod sold the home in 1952 following the death of her husband. Marjorie Cox owned the home from 1952 to 1960. John and Grace Heiland owned the home from 1960 to 1963. Lawrence and Carolyn Papp owned the home from 1963 until it was sold to the current owner, Chris and Nedda Karlen in 2023.

As part of the City's historical landmark process, the house was evaluated by a professional historical architect, Dr. Barbara Lamprecht from Modern Resources, who specializes in Modern architecture – refer to the Historical Evaluation under Attachment No. 3.

In terms of the architectural design, the Brod House is a single-story, T-shaped house with white smooth stucco, wood paneling, and glass windows along the exterior elevations. It contains a flat roof that is characteristic of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style. The front elevation of the residence faces Oakwood Drive and features a row of alternating large, fixed casement windows. The wood paneled front entry is deeply recessed from the outermost wall, contains a brick planter, and is sheltered by the flat roof. The front yard contains mature trees that screen the front entry from view of the street. The south elevation of the residence fronts E. Sycamore Avenue and features a long wall length comprised of vertical redwood planks and alternating narrow casement and large fixed windows. There is a door with access to the kitchen and a door with access to a bedroom along this elevation. The east elevation consists of the garage, a storage shed, and the side of a bedroom wing that stems out the north of the residence. This elevation consists of white stucco walls and alternating fixed and operable casement windows along the bedroom wing. This bedroom wing faces the rear yard tucked away in the northwest corner of the property which contains a garden area which consists of a lawn surrounded by bushes, shrubs, and trees. The north elevation faces the interior of the lot and consists of fixed glass windows looking out from the living room into the pool and yard area, a screened garden room that is open to the elements, and the end of the master bedroom which contains an L shaped stuccoed wall that wraps around a wall of windows.

In addition to exemplifying the distinct characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style, the Brod House includes a number of Neutra's character defining details which include:

- Metal-capped white stucco walls that project above the roof line, such as on the front/south elevation shown below in Figure 2, to help break up the flat roof and provide alternating heights throughout the design of the home.



Figure 2 – Metal-capped stucco wall on the southeast corner of the house

- A gutter made of crimped metal fascia and painted in “Neutra Brown,” a dark brown shade typically used by Neutra. A rare trademark of his and the fascia material is no longer replaceable. The material is shown below in Figure 3 along the roofline.



Figure 3 – The north elevation of the home that faces the swimming pool

- Neutra’s signature trademark, a “spider leg”, extending out from the front porch which is a beam that extends out from the roof and is supported by a vertical beam and creates a perception of expansiveness for the home. See Figure 4 below.



Figure 4 – The spider leg feature at the front entry of the home

- “Factorlite” glass, which is a translucent glass that is obscured, on certain windows of the home to provide privacy. Many of Neutra’s homes have had this glass replaced. It is shown below in Figure 5.



Figure 5 – The front elevation of the home. The “Factorlite” glass is the obscured glass on the 3 windowpanes furthest right.

- Wood planking on the exterior walls and flush panel doors which alternate with the glass and stucco walls typical of Neutra designs. Figure 6 below shows the paneling along the south elevation of the house.



Figure 6 – The wood paneling along the south elevation of the house.

One of Neutra's most significant architectural design elements and unique on the Brod House is how connected the indoor space with the outdoor space area. Neutra tucked a garden room, a screened outdoor area, into one of the corners of the home and incorporated large floor to ceiling glass doors along the exterior walls which can be opened to combine the garden room space with the interior of the home (See Figures 7 through 9 below). Additional large, fixed windows that extend out from the garden room area of the home along the living room and walkway to the master bedroom provide an even greater open-type design on this portion of the house. These large expanses of glass walls are typical on every Neutra design but is uniquely executed on the Brod House with the location of the garden room.



Figure 7 – The garden room is shown on the right tucked into the northeast corner of the Brod House



Figure 8 – A sliding glass door can be opened to connect the garden room to the dining and living room

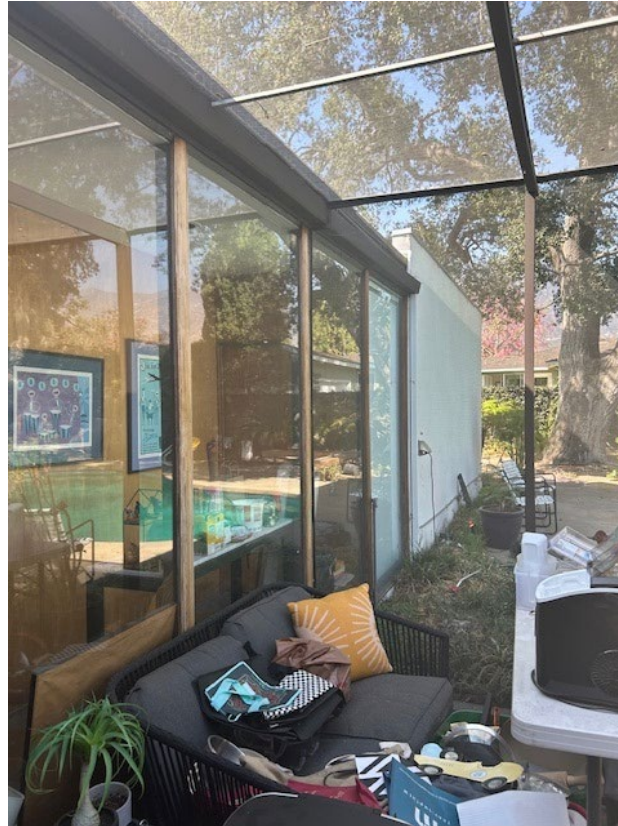


Figure 9 – Floor-to-ceiling, glass windows continue beyond the garden room to create a more open look

The landscaping for the property was designed by local landscape architect, W. Bennett Covert in 1960. Although the landscape design came later, it took into account Neutra's Mid-Century Modern design. Fruitless olive trees are provided along the front property line and next to the walkway pavers that lead to the front door to help frame the beginning of the pathway to the front entrance of the home. These trees and additional crape myrtle trees along the front of the property create a sense of division between public and private. Shrubs and other smaller trees are present along the south side of the property to provide added separation between the home and the public sidewalk. Within the rear and interior side yard, two native oak trees are present along with fruit trees and ferns which provide privacy, shade, and decoration around the pool and garden areas (See Figures 10 and 11 below for images of the front yard and rear garden areas).



Figure 10 – The Brod House, front entry as seen from Oakwood Drive



Figure 11 – West elevation of the Brod House, showing the master bedroom wing, rear garden, and oak trees on the property

Since the original construction in 1949, the property has undergone a few improvements to either the site or inside the house, such as a swimming pool, perimeter walls, and modifications to the kitchen. None of these improvements would alter the status of this potential historic resource. There have been no alterations to the exterior elevations of the building and the design remains relatively intact from when it was originally built. The following summarizes the permit history for the property.

- 1948 The original building permit was issued to construct the Brod House, which was completed in 1949.
- 1960 Permit issued for the swimming pool.
- 2006 Permit issued for a 6 foot tall perimeter wall along the northern property line and shared with 1211 Oakwood Drive.
- 2007 Permit issued to re-roof the house with a white 3-ply built up flat roof.

In addition to the above permitted alterations, the following observed alterations were identified:

- The original narrow curving concrete walkway that led from the sidewalk at Oakwood Drive to the front door was replaced with large concrete pavers in 1960.
- The Papp family built a concrete wall with a wooden gate which separated the driveway and garage area from the backyard of the residence.

ANALYSIS

The designation criteria for a Historical Landmark at the local level in Section 9103.17.060 of the City's Development Code requires that the Historic Preservation Commission forward a recommendation to the City Council whether the potential historic resource should be designated as a local landmark on the basis that it meets one or more of the following local eligibility criteria, listed below.

The potential historic resource must also be at least 45 years of age, unless it can be demonstrated that the resource has achieved exceptional importance within the last 45 years (Development Code Section 9103.17.060(C)). The house was constructed in 1949 and is therefore 75 years old as of 2024, meeting the age requirement.

The Commission, among other relevant factors, the following criteria in making the findings:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Arcadia's or California's history;
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local or California history;
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of master, or possesses high artistic values;
or
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the city or state.

Based on the historical evaluation that was prepared by Modern Resources, the house meets criteria no. 3 on the basis that the Brod House is a significant example of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style.

Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of master, or possesses high artistic values.

Facts to Support This Criteria: The Brod House is significant under this criterion because the house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style, is an excellent example of a renowned architect, and possesses high artistic values. The design of the home is completely true to the characteristics of Mid-Century Modern architecture. While many of the surrounding homes in the neighborhood are designed in a more traditional Ranch style, the Brod House was ahead of its time in providing design features new to the period in which it was constructed and now are common architectural features seen in many homes. Today, the house remains one of the few examples of extraordinary execution of the Mid-Century Modern design in the entire City. Some of the features that embody the distinctive characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern during this period and are present on the design of the Brod House are:

- The flat roof and long, horizontal profile of the home
- Post-and-beam construction
- Use of simple modern materials such as concrete, stucco, glass, brick, and wood
- Integration of the home with the outdoors through the use of glass and materials that continue from the inside to the outside
- Sliding, casement, and clerestory windows and sliding glass doors
- Functional and thoughtful built-in furniture
- Many paths of travel throughout the house

Furthermore, the residence is an excellent example of Richard Neutra's work in retaining a high number of signature character-defining features associated with his residential architecture in the postwar years including features such as walls that project above the roof line to provide alternating heights on the home, "spider leg" beams which are a trademark Neutra feature, "Factorlite" glass windows, and his execution of connecting the interior space with the outdoors through the use of vast amounts of glass. The large expanses of glass windows and doors along the northeast corner of the house in conjunction with the garden room, which can be opened and combined with the interior space, is the most exceptional design element of Neutra's work on the Brod House and not seen on many other of his works. It is evident that The Brod House has not been significantly altered since it was first built, therefore maintaining it in Neutra's

original form and retaining its architectural integrity. Additionally, it is the only house in Arcadia that was designed by Neutra and is one of the best examples of his work.

In addition to the requirements listed above, an individual resource must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

1. It is listed on the National and/or California Register of Historic Places

The subject site is not listed on the National or California Register of Historic Places but has been determined to be eligible for listing by the historical architect, as the Brod House meets the criteria for listing and rises to level of state and national historic designation. The City of Arcadia's historic preservation ordinance mirrors the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. The subject property retains all seven aspects of integrity for consideration as a historic landmark, as defined by the National Park Service, including location, workmanship, design, materials, feeling, and association. As for the setting component of integrity, the Brod House has had few changes over the years similarly to many of the homes within the vicinity in the Highlands and the neighborhood has maintained its architectural integrity over the years. The house has also retained a high degree of integrity due to the minimal changes that have been done to it throughout its history. Many of Neutra's other homes have been altered in some form making this home a rare, preserved example of Neutra's Mid-Century Modern work. Therefore, the subject property is an excellent candidate for designation as a historic landmark at the local, state, and national level.

2. It is an iconic property

The Brod House is an iconic property within the City of Arcadia because the residence is the only home in Arcadia designed by Richard Neutra, is an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern architecture, and has undergone relatively few changes in the last 75 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

It has been determined that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15308, Class 8, pertaining to actions by regulatory agencies for the protection of the environment. Refer Attachment No. 4 for the Preliminary Exemption Assessment.

PUBLIC NOTICE/COMMENTS

A public hearing notice for this item was published in the Arcadia Weekly, and posted at the City Clerk's Office, City Council Chambers, the Arcadia Library, and on the City's website on September 26, 2024. It was also mailed to the property owners located within 300 feet of the subject property. As of October 3, 2024, no comments were received related to the historical designation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Historic Preservation Commission adopt Resolution No. 2156, recommending that the City Council find that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and approve Historical Landmark No. HL 24-01, designating the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House at 1203 Oakwood Drive as a historical landmark.

If any Historic Preservation Commissioners, or other interested party has any questions or comments regarding this matter prior to the October 8, 2024 hearing, please contact Senior Planner, Edwin Arreola at (626) 821-4334, or by email at earreola@ArcadiaCA.gov.

Approved:



Lisa L. Flores
Deputy Development Services Director

- Attachment No. 1: Resolution No. 2156
- Attachment No. 2: Aerial Photo with Zoning Information and Photos of the Subject Property and Vicinity
- Attachment No. 3: Historical Evaluation of the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House
- Attachment No. 4: Preliminary Exemption Assessment

Attachment No. 1

Resolution No. 2156

RESOLUTION NO. 2156

A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ARCADIA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. HL 24-01 TO DESIGNATE THE EARLE L. AND MADY G. BROD HOUSE THAT WAS DESIGNED BY THE MASTER ARCHITECT RICHARD NEUTRA AS A HISTORICAL LANDMARK WITH A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (“CEQA”) AT 1203 OAKWOOD DRIVE

WHEREAS, on August 2, 2024, a Historical Landmark application No. HL 24-01 was filed by the Property Owner, Chris Karlen (“Applicant”), to designate his house, the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House (“Brod House”) that was designed by a notable Master Architect, Richard Neutra, as a historical landmark at 1203 Oakwood Drive; and

WHEREAS, on September 19, 2024, Planning Services completed an environmental assessment for the designation of a historic resource in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission determine that the designation of a historic resource is exempt under Section 15308 of the CEQA Guidelines pertaining to actions by regulatory agencies for the protection of the environment; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2024, a duly noticed public hearing was held before the Historic Preservation Commission on said application, at which time all interested persons were given full opportunity to be heard and to present evidence; and

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the application for the purposes of transmitting a recommendation to the City Council concerning the designation of the Brod House as a local landmark.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ARCADIA, CALIFORNIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The factual data submitted by the Community Development Division in the staff report dated October 8, 2024, are true and correct.

SECTION 2. This Commission finds, based upon the entire record, pursuant to section 9103.17.060 of the Development Code, that the potential resource is eligible to be designated as a landmark based on one of the four criteria for designation and that as an individual resource, the building must also comply with one of the two additional requirements listed in the Local Eligibility and Designation Criteria of the Development Code to be eligible for designation. Those required findings are set forth below:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Arcadia's or California's history;
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local or California history;
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of master, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the city or state.

FACT: The potential historic resource meets criteria no. 3. The Brod House is significant under this criterion because the house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style, is an excellent example of a renowned architect, and possesses high artistic values. The design of the home is completely true to the characteristics of Mid-Century Modern architecture. While many of

the surrounding homes in the neighborhood are designed in a more traditional Ranch style, the Brod House was ahead of its time in providing design features new to the period in which it was constructed and now are common architectural features seen in many homes. Today, the house remains one of the few examples of extraordinary execution of the Mid-Century Modern design in the entire City. Some of the features that embody the distinctive characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern during this period and are present on the design of the Brod House are:

- The flat roof and long, horizontal profile of the home
- Post-and-beam construction
- Use of simple modern materials such as concrete, stucco, glass, brick, and wood
- Integration of the home with the outdoors through the use of glass and materials that continue from the inside to the outside
- Sliding, casement, and clerestory windows and sliding glass doors
- Functional and thoughtful built-in furniture
- Many paths of travel throughout the house

Furthermore, the residence is an excellent example of Richard Neutra's work in retaining a high number of signature character-defining features associated with his residential architecture in the postwar years including features such as walls that project above the roof line to provide alternating heights on the home, "spider leg" beams which are a trademark Neutra feature, "Factorlite" glass windows, and his execution of connecting the interior space with the outdoors through the use of vast amounts of glass. The large expanses of glass windows and doors along the northeast corner of the house in conjunction with the garden room, which can be opened and combined with the interior

space, is the most exceptional design element of Neutra's work on the Brod House and not seen on many other of his works. It is evident that The Brod House has not been significantly altered since it was first built, therefore maintaining it in Neutra's original form and retaining its architectural integrity. Additionally, it is the only house in Arcadia that was designed by Neutra and is one of the best examples of his work.

SECTION 3: In addition to the requirements listed above, an individual resource must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

1. It is listed on the National and/or California Register of Historic Places

FACT: The subject site is not listed on the National or California Register of Historic Places but has been determined to be eligible for listing by the historical architect, as the Brod House meets the criteria for listing and rises to level of state and national historic designation. The City of Arcadia's historic preservation ordinance mirrors the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. The subject property retains all seven aspects of integrity for consideration as a historic landmark, as defined by the National Park Service, including location, workmanship, design, materials, feeling, and association. As for the setting component of integrity, the Brod House has had few changes over the years similarly to many of the homes within the vicinity in the Highlands and the neighborhood has maintained its architectural integrity over the years. The house has also retained a high degree of integrity due to the minimal changes that have been done to it throughout its history. Many of Neutra's other homes have been altered in some form making this home a rare, preserved example of Neutra's Mid-Century Modern work. Therefore, the subject

property is an excellent candidate for designation as a historic landmark at the local, state, and national level.

2. It is an iconic property

FACT: The Brod House is an iconic property within the City of Arcadia because the residence is the only home in Arcadia designed by Richard Neutra, is an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern architecture, and has undergone relatively few changes in the last 75 years.

SECTION 4. Pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the proposed historic landmark designation qualifies as a Class 8 Categorical Exemption. This is because the project consists of actions taken by the City to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and protection of the environment, and the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment per Section 15308 of the CEQA Guidelines.

SECTION 5. For the foregoing reasons, the Historic Preservation Commission determines that the proposed historic landmark designation is Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Section 15308, Class 8, and recommends that the City Council approve a historic landmark designation for the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House at 1203 Oakwood Drive.

SECTION 6. The Secretary shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.


Passed, approved and adopted this 8th day of October, 2024.

Marilynne Wilander
Chair, Historic Preservation
Commission

ATTEST:

Lisa L. Flores
Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



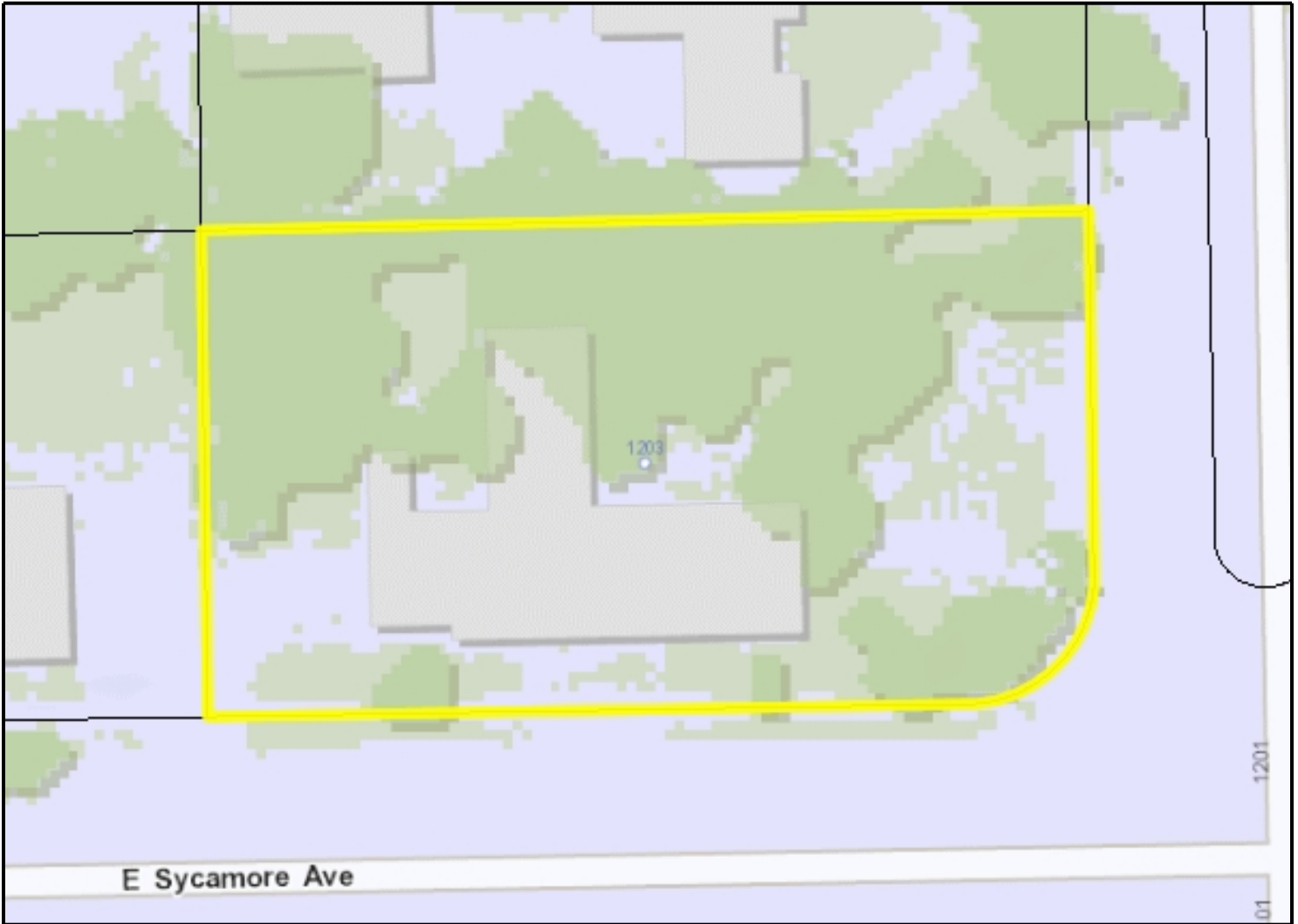
Michael J. Maurer
City Attorney

Attachment No. 2

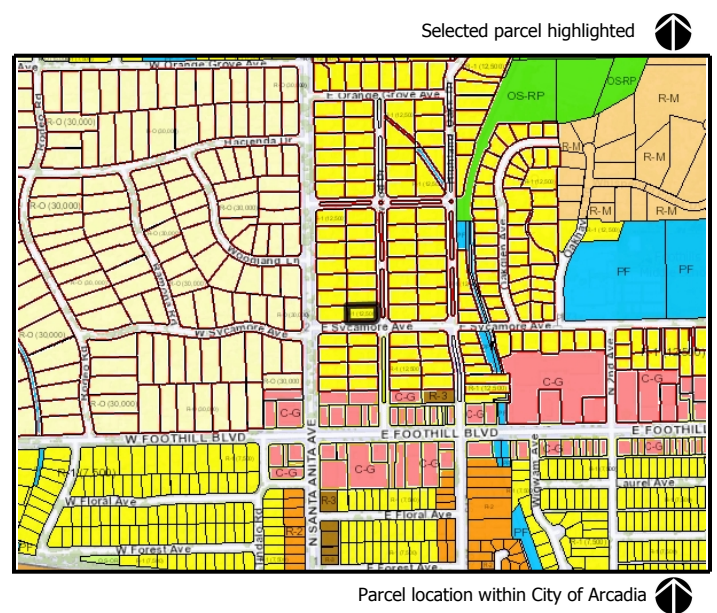
Aerial Photo with Zoning Information &
Photos of the Subject Site

Site Address: **1203 OAKWOOD DR**

Property Owner(s): Property Owner



Property Characteristics	
Zoning:	R-1 (12,500)
General Plan:	VLDR
Lot Area (sq ft):	
Main Structure / Unit (sq. ft.):	2,117
Year Built:	1949
Number of Units:	1
Overlays	
Architectural Design Overlay:	Yes
Downtown Overlay:	N/A
Downtown Parking Overlay:	N/A
Parking Overlay:	N/A
Racetrack Event Overlay:	N/A
Residential Flex Overlay:	N/A
Special Height Overlay:	N/A















Attachment No. 3

Historical Evaluation of the Earle L.
and Mady G. Brod House

HISTORICAL CONTEXT, DESCRIPTION, and ALTERATIONS

Historical Context

The property is part of the 91-parcel Tract 4129. Surveyed by Edward M. Lynch in June 1923 (Los Angeles County Land Records, Map Book No. 75 48-49, Block 4, Lot 8), the land was formerly part of Elias .J. "Lucky" Baldwin's Rancho. The Arcadia Historic Context Statement (AHCS) states that the Highlands was developed in the 1920s by the Cook Woodley Company as a "highly exclusive community featuring large lots, picturesque views and a \$10,000 minimum construction cost."¹ This is confirmed by Gordon S. Eberly in his book, *Arcadia, City of the Santa Anita*, who wrote that the tract was part of the estate of Baldwin's eldest daughter, Clara Baldwin Stocker, who sold the tract to the company, including the whole area from Foothill Boulevard to the mountains between Santa Anita Avenue and the Santa Anita Wash. Ads for parcels in the began appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* in the late 1930s, with short articles every Sunday marketing 100-foot by 185-foot lots for sale by the Three Cities Land Company of Arcadia, the new owners/developers of the Highlands, marketing that continued during the week with a three-line ad that appeared daily.² The lots sold for \$1,350 under the text "Cream of the Southland, going fast, beautiful trees, good soil, cheap water."³ In 1942, the *Times* reported that Harold J. Bissner, Jr. (1925 – 2020), a well-known architect in Pasadena who went on to great acclaim as a Modernist , designed two model homes that were ready for viewing.⁴ By late 1942, the George Elkins Company took over ads for lots and model homes in the Highlands, especially touting the Bissner design at 1230 Oakwood Drive. (Constructed in 1941 and across the street from the Brod House, Bissner's informal Ranch style house is in excellent condition.)⁵ Another model home, this time designed by architect Howard G. Elwell, made its debut in 1945. A splayed U in plan, it was to be "built immediately of available materials," recalling the ban on materials throughout World War II. Building was slow until the war's end, when development took off in Southland cities, including Arcadia, fueled by returning service personnel and the aerospace and related industries.

The Highlands represent a dramatic shift in Arcadia's identity. In the 1920s and '30s, the city's thriving poultry industry was known as the "egg basket" of Arcadia, infusing the city with

1 Architectural Resources Group (ARG), *Arcadia Historic Context Statement*, Jan. 11, 2016, 71

2 *Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 1941

3 *Ibid.*, Nov. 30, 1941

4 *Ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1942

5 Bissner has another important connection to Arcadia. With another distinguished Pasadena architect, Harold B. Zook, he designed the iconic windmill and folded plate prototype for Van de Kamp's coffee shops in 1967. Of the 13 that were built in Southern California, only Arcadia's remains. In excellent condition thanks to the efforts of preservationists, the windmill began rotating in 2016. It is now a Denny's at the northeast corner of Huntington Drive and Santa Anita Avenue. Bissner was still alive to see his design's revival before his death four years later.

The Earle L and Mady Brod House

1203 Oakwood Drive

Arcadia 91006-2411

enough wealth to build schools, recreational facilities, and shopping centers. The multi-faceted philanthropy of Anita Baldwin, the younger daughter of Lucky Baldwin, contributed greatly to the city's cultural and physical well-being.

The Pacific Southwest Trust & Savings Banks established covenants and restrictions for much Tract 1429 on Jan. 4, 1924; these were modified and made more exclusive by the new developers, the Three Cities Land Company, an instrument that was executed on July 15, 1941. These restrictions applied to most of the Tract, including Block 4, a block that included the subject property. No hedges more than five feet tall, for example, could be erected that were within a 75-foot setback of the front property line; effecting a quality of openness throughout the development. Owners were required to maintain citrus trees and not to keep animals other than pets. And like countless other suburban developments, the lots could not be "sold, conveyed, leased, or occupied by any person other than one of the Caucasian race," unless those in the "domestic service of the owner or occupant."⁶ The restrictions were echoed in an Aug. 31, 1939, article in the *Arcadia Bulletin* that baldly announced that "race restrictions assures future property investments ... practically all residential areas in Arcadia are now restricted to the white race."⁷

Notably, even withing given the beauty of the Highlands, the north-south Oakwood Drive is exceptional because of the street's remarkable width (70 feet wide) ; the consistency of the homes, and the depth of the setbacks, virtually embodying the essence of ideal American postwar suburbia. That first Bissner design still stands, almost across from the Brod, and is in excellent condition with few exterior changes. To the north, the homes become more eclectic in design, with various dates, heights, and styles. Streets are narrower and curvier as they meander up to the mountains.

According to the Los Angeles County Assessor, the Brod House was built in 1949. In this southern part of the Highlands, long, low one-story Ranch style homes predominate. Designed in the International Style, the Brod House shares these basic tenets of massing while also being a sharp contrast to its neighbors with its flat roof, unornamented exterior finishes of stucco and redwood, and regular expanses of casement windows.

⁶ Three Cities Land Co., "Restrictions, Santa Anita Highlands, Tract 4129," 3, Arcadia Public Library. Norman Nixon was the company's president; W.L Hoffeditz, the secretary.

⁷ Such restrictions were common throughout America. The Shelley vs. Kramer was a 1948 Supreme Court case that outlawed race restrictions in restrictive covenants. It is difficult to assess whether this affected the Brods, who were Jewish, as writers, theologians, and scholars debate whether Jewish persons are Caucasian. Notably, Neutra, who was Jewish and an atheist, designed both single-family houses and multi-family family for clients of color and a variety of faiths beginning in the 1930s.

The Earle L and Mady Brod House

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Summary Description, House

Constructed in 1949, the one-story, 2,113-square-foot Earle L and Mady Brod House is located at 1203 Oakwood Drive at the northwest corner of Oakwood Drive and East Sycamore Avenue in the wooded, leafy neighborhood known as “The Highlands” and in the past as the “Santa Anita Highlands,” and “The Highland Oaks.” The neighborhood is renowned for its generous parcels, extensive landscaping, and mature trees, including Coast Live Oaks, sycamores, and pepper trees. Because it is bounded on the east by a canyon and huge wash, Santa Anita Canyon, on the east, and mountains on the north, where the Highlands stretches into the San Gabriel Mountains, traffic largely disappears above Foothill Boulevard, the Highlands’ southern border. Santa Anita Avenue, beautifully landscaped in this northern part of the avenue, is the development’s western border. South of Foothill, everything changes, with easy proximity to retail, the Arboretum, the Santa Anita Mall, the racetrack, and the 210 Freeway. The Period of Significance is 1949, the year of completion. The east-facing dwelling is a modified T-shape in plan. One arm of the T projects toward Oakwood Drive, while landscaping on the north provides privacy to the screened garden room that opens out to a pool, added in 1960 by later owners in the northeast corner of the house. Set well back from the street, the setting comprises a variety of plantings and mature trees. A series of large rectangular pavers of exposed aggregate concrete, individually set into the lawn and asymmetrically offset midway, leads to the front door.

East (Primary) Elevation

The primary façade is characterized by an entire row of alternating larger fixed and narrower operable casement windows surmounting a wall of white stucco; its flat roof continues north to shelter the deeply recessed primary entry, a wood flush-panel front door set into a surround of full-height wood paneling. To the immediate left of the paneling, a white-painted full-height wall forms the bathroom’s north wall. At the south end of this east elevation, a metal-capped end of a white stucco wall projects above the roofline, a typical Neutra strategy. To the right (north) of the inset panel-and-door, a large beam extends beyond the roofline toward the street. Supporting the roof, it is attached to a wood post set into a low, fifteen-foot-long multi-colored brick planter. Together, the extended horizontal beam and the vertical supporting post comprise Neutra’s most famous trademark, known as a “spider leg.” Neutra intended the device, which stretches beyond the building footprint, to connect the structure to the earth and to create the perception of expansiveness. Likewise, the brick planter (now painted) reaches out to the street and serves to connect the pathway to the recessed entry. Above, the roof extends north beyond the recessed entry about four feet to the north. An in-plane light strip at the edge of the overhang, next to a screened strip of venting, is present; another important character-defining feature.⁸ Together, the light strip and the venting run the length of the

⁸ Neutra referred to this strip of lighting as a “night curtain.” It was to expand the range of vision at night; he also believed that the light, reflecting off the exterior glass, enhanced privacy within.

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overhang, which terminates where the kitchen/bedroom wing begins.

By contrast to the other windows on this southern end of the primary façade, the last three northmost windows are translucent “Factrolite,” a prismatic industrial glass invented in the 1920s and a favorite of Neutra’s.⁹ The powder room for an office suite lies behind the windows; designed for a young married optometrist, the suite, whether used as an office or guest quarters, can be sealed off with a huge wood sliding wall from the living room. A narrow corridor from the front door, perpendicular to the front door, leads patients away from the primary living space; a closet and the compact bathroom, conveniently enroute to the office, is a thoughtful gesture for guests or patients. Other character-defining features on the primary east façade include the rounded four-inch-wide post caps between each pair of casement windows; the slightly concave section tempers the strict orthogonality of the design. The gutter, made of crimped metal fascia, is another important and rare Neutra trademark. Typically rendered in silver, here it is rendered in a brown whose shade is dark and rich, known as “Neutra Brown.”¹⁰

Shielded by a mass of mature plantings, the northern portion of the east elevation (the long stem of the T), including the light wood-framed, tall, screened garden room, the pool, and the bedroom wing cannot be seen from the street. A rhythmic series of full-height fixed light glass walls stands in front of the flagstone corridor flanking all the bedrooms in this wing. The screened garden room is paved with flagstone, as is the dining area between the kitchen and the screened garden room and the adjacent bedroom corridor. A full-height aluminum screen door fills the northernmost bay of four bays facing Oakwood Drive, providing easy access to the pool.

South Elevation, exterior

Facing Sycamore Avenue, the south elevation’s long length of vertical one-inch x three-inch vertical redwood tongue-and-groove planking is surmounted by banks of windows (operable clerestory windows, denoting the living room to the east, alternating between smaller, square fixed windows and the five clerestories) and casement windows to the west, demarking the kitchen. Following the same pattern seen on the primary, east elevation, here narrow casement windows alternate with larger fixed windows. Three doors are present on this elevation. A half glass wood door to the kitchen divides the length of the casement windows, and another, a solid wood door that terminates the wood-and-glass plane on the west, leads to a small bedroom, originally intended as a maid’s bedroom. A one-story-tall square of white stucco,

⁹ In many Neutra homes, such original Factrolite glass has often been replaced and thus is quite rare.

¹⁰ The series of tiny ridges stiffens the fascia and eliminates unsightly seam lines when overlapped. Most manufacturers of such fascia, which requires a large stamping machine from the nineteenth century, have abandoned the product.

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slightly taller than the roofline and overhang above the wood planking and windows, projects about three feet beyond the rest of this elevation. Here, the third door, a solid west-facing wood door, anchors the south façade on the east. Notably, to the east of the kitchen door, a small, hinged square of wood low on the façade opens to the outdoors, it was designed to hold firewood brought in from the outdoors.¹¹ The door leads to the optometrist's office, providing another way to enter and exit the office. At the south elevation's other end, another a similar, slightly taller rectangle of one-story tall plane of white stucco defines the south end of the two-car garage; together the west and east stucco planes. Subtly different in size, these two planes of stucco bracket and frame the middle wood-and-window section. A small square of redwood planking, just east of the kitchen door, is not original and appears to have filled in a vent.

West Elevation, exterior

The west elevation comprises the garage and a rectangular storage shed on the south and the bedroom wing, which forms the stem of the T-shape plan on the north. Below a deep overhang, painted white on its underside to reflect light, the west-facing wall features alternating fixed and operable casement surmounting a white-painted stucco wall along the entire west elevation. As with the powder room in front, the Factrolite windows identify the bathroom for the primary suite, separating the suite from the two bedrooms.

The shed projects from the north elevation of the garage, serving to form a shallow, U-shaped courtyard on the southern end of the arrangement. Consistent with the play of alternating heights throughout the design between white stucco planes projecting above the roofline of the brown-painted metal fascia, a rectangular section of the brown-painted metal fascia-trimmed roof extends from the storage shed to shelter the door to the shed below. Supported by two round steel posts at the end of the overhang, the slender structure's roof line is lower than the adjacent, white-painted stucco plane. A concrete pad at the ground plane mirrors this small roof extension above.

Facing north, the "bottom" of the shallow U-shaped courtyard is a short wall comprising two doors flanking a tall white rectangular stucco plane surmounted by windows of obscured glass. An upper sliding window lies above a horizontally oriented, narrow, fixed light; together the window unit denotes the third bathroom. A door on the east leads to the kitchen, while a door on the west opens into the garage. A third door, also on the north, leads to the storage shed, which has a sliding metal clerestory on its east elevation. These doors all face the generous lawn and garden at the rear, west portion of the property. Separating the garage and parking area, a later concrete block wall with a wood gate serves as the southern and western borders

¹¹ To improve function and economy of movement, Neutra devised ways to exploit interior space, especially in kitchens and wood storage.

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of the garden.

The northmost end of this west elevation terminates with a four-foot wide fixed picture window, perpendicular to an identical window around the corner, on the north elevation, a gesture that identifies the primary bedroom suite at the end of the T-shape's north-south stem.

North Elevation, exterior

The eastern end of the north elevation comprises the entrance, the living room, the screened garden room and the pool. To the immediate west of the front door, a fixed window wall comprising three bays runs the length of the living room's north side. Where the last bay meets the edge of the tall, screened garden room, a 16-foot-long sliding steel-framed glass wall can shut the garden room off in cooler temperatures or open to the dining area, joining the two spaces. Another full-height glass door, hinged, on the south side of the screened garden room and perpendicular to the sliding wall opens the corner even further. This steel-framed door is one of five four-foot bays along the walk to the master bedroom. Elaborated in Significance, the location of the garden room is unique in Neutra's canon. Tucked into the corner, here living, dining (with a multi-colored brick indoor grill with copper facings), kitchen, and the bedroom converge; located just south of the swimming pool, the garden room offers a flexible space for entertaining or meals. .

The landscaping, pool, and benches were added by the third owner in 1960. The east side of the pool is flanked by a metal fence that disappears into banks of mature plantings. Stout metal posts support a curved wooden bench between the pool and the living room, while a three-piece zig-zig bench stands below a California native oak tree to the north of the pool.

The west end of the north elevation defines the end of the master bedroom. An L-shape plane of white-painted stucco wraps the bank of windows: a tall, narrow leg of the L projects above the roof line on the west and also forms the bottom half of the stucco below the windows. A generous picture window at the very west end of this elevation, matching one perpendicular to it around the corner on the east elevation, privileges this bedroom as the primary suite. To the east of the picture window are two units of a rectangular fixed light glass and a narrower casement window. To the west, the roof extends to become part of the east elevation's long overhang.

Notably, the same play of taller planes of stucco projecting above horizontally oriented planes of brown-painted fascia continues here, even on this rarely seen elevation.

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*Nomination, Designation Historic Landmark, City of Arcadia
Modern Resources / Barbara Lamprecht, M.Arch. Ph.D.*

July 20, 2024

The Earle L and Mady Brod House

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Description, Setting

The unusually large lot accommodates a rich variety of plants, shrubs, and trees in a variety of configurations that in a smaller lot would feel cramped and crowded. Apart from the two massive California native oak trees on the north (potentially Coast Live Oak/*Quercus agrifolia*), much of the other plantings, especially along Oakwood Drive, reflect the work of landscape architect W. Bennett Covert. Covert's executed 1960 plan reveals an unusual sensitivity to Neutra's design intentions ... and even the architect's practices, integrating the site and the building. This sensitivity is especially seen in the front lawn, where Covert set the tone and rhythm of the design in three ways:

- Replaced a narrow curvilinear pathway with a linear, modular path of concrete pavers
- Framed entrance at sidewalk with a "forest" of trees to announce change from public to private
- Echoed Neutra's asymmetry in offset pattern of pavers that slows the walk to the entry

First, Covert replaced a curvilinear concrete entry walkway (whose narrowness was out of step with the largesse and potential of this generous parcel) with a series of large, modular, rectangular concrete pavers. They are spaced equidistantly from each other to allow for planting (lawn and/or ground covers) between each paver. The modular pads are offset near the entrance, from the sidewalk, creating interest along the pathway within a linear form that is common with post war landscape designs. The modular concrete pads or paved modules were installed in such a way along an imaginary axis that aligns the first three (3) paved modules on the north side to the remaining six (6) paved modules to the north. A transitional concrete paver, twice the length of the other pavers, spans the entire width of the offset path to create 90-degree transition angles between the two offset sets of pavers. Notably, with their exposed pebble/aggregate finish, the pavers are sensorially distinguished from the sidewalks, another typical Neutra strategy that the landscape architect, not Neutra, designed.¹² Two offset rectangular planters, filled with thick groups of firethorns (*Pyracantha*) and other plantings, accentuate the offset pattern of the pavers and the asymmetry of Neutra's design, a strategy that screens the pool from public view while still maintaining access and an open feel in the garden.

Near the sidewalk at the southeast corner, two fruitless olive trees frame the beginning of the entry walk to the front door. To the immediate north, as referred to by Covert, a mature

¹² Neutra often offset walkways, as Covert did here, inspired by his visits to Japan, beginning in 1930, and wrote about the physiological and psychological impacts of subtle changes in texture underfoot. See the Connell House, Pebble Beach, 1958, and the Goldman houses, Los Angeles, 1951, among others.

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“forest” of six crape myrtle trees (*Lagerstroemia indica*) creates a diaphanous border between the street and the front lawn. Two additional crape myrtles stand to the south of the entry walkway. Below the crape myrtle trees, an understory planting of blue fescue (*Festuca ovina* ‘*glauca*’) ground cover is massed, another “forest” noted on the 1960 Covert plan. An L-shaped arrangement of Variegated Tobria (*Pittosporum tobria* ‘*variegata*’) hugs the house, while agapanthus (*Agapanthis orientalis*), daylilies (*Hemerocallis* species), Indian Hawthorne (*Rhaphiolepis indica*) shrubs, and a yucca (*Yucca* species) are planted on the south side aligning the sidewalk along Sycamore Avenue; a large mature Sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*) is also present on the avenue side. At the west side of the south elevation, a striking Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*) with its majestic red snarled trunk, stands outside the kitchen door, while Tasmanian Tree Fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*), sword ferns, and asparagus ferns are planted near the front entry.

The back yard’s west side features fairly recent plantings of dense Carolina Laurel Cherry (*Prunus Caroliniana*) shrubs. A large lemon-scented Eucalyptus in the northwest corner rises above several plantings of Mock Orange (*Pittosporum undulatum*) to the north of the pool. The California native oak trees, along with more Mock Orange (*Pittosporum undulatum*), a lime tree (*Citrus* species), Camellia shrubs (*Camellia* species), Japanese Aralia (*Fatsia japonica*), and Tasmanian Tree Fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) shade wooden benches, possibly designed by Covert, that are mounted on stout steel columns on the north and south sides of the pool are shaded by. Running north-south, a low painted wood fence is aligned with a black metal fence that separates the pool deck and side yard from the front yard, where fire sticks (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) and New Zealand flax (*Phormium* species) are intermixed with the firethorns (*Pyracantha* species) noted above, in the same planting areas. Three pineapple guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*) trees anchor the property’s northeast corner.

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Alterations

1. The narrow curving concrete leading from the primary façade to the sidewalk at Oakwood Drive was replaced with a series of large exposed aggregate concrete pavers, based on a review of drawings by W. Bennett Covert dated Oct. 27, 1960, just a little more than three months after the Heilands bought the property. According to an original rendering, Neutra had intended to use flagstone for the path to the entry; never executed; an even earlier plan shows a curved walkway in the same conformation as that that was built, but in ashlar masonry, not concrete.
2. Simultaneously, Covert also designed the biomorphically shaped pool located north of the living room and east of the bedroom wing.
3. The Papp family built a concrete block wall with a wooden gate separates the garage and the back yard.
4. While maintaining the overall spatial layout of the kitchen, some modifications have occurred, possibly under the energetic Heilands. While the wood has been painted, cabinets present on the north, east, and south elevations retain their original wood handles for the cabinets and cutout insets for drawers have been retained, along with the character-defining pass-through between the and east elevations of the kitchen and the ingenious stepped shelves for glasses and cups present in the lowest upper cabinet on the east. (The inset cutouts for pulling drawers out are typical Neutra features; he wanted to eliminate the cost of cabinet hardware and to reduce cleaning efforts around handles.) The south countertop has been replaced, along with built-in oven and banquette with bench seating on the west side of the room, although the space for the banquette and seating has not been altered. Likewise a large refrigerator has been inserted into the western end of the north elevation, changing the original cabinet configuration.

SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Significance

Mirroring the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources, the City of Arcadia's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 103.17.060, establishes the criteria for the designation of an individual resource:

- 1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Arcadia's or California's history;*
- 2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local or California history;*
- 3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values;*
- 4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the city or state.*

Criteria for Integrity

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria, the resource must "retain sufficient integrity." Integrity is defined as the "authenticity of a historical resource's physical integrity as evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the time period within which the resource attained significance."

As defined by the National Park Service, the seven aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Notably, the City of Arcadia's criteria for integrity provide for a "greater degree of flexibility shall be provided when evaluating the integrity of a locally eligible historic resource, as opposed to one eligible for listing in the National or California registers."

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Eligibility, Significance, Criterion 3, Architecture

Summary Paragraph

Designed in 1948 and completed in 1949, the Earle L and Mady R. Brod House is eligible for listing as a historical landmark in the City of Arcadia under Criterion 3, as representing the work of a master and possessing high artistic values. The residence is an excellent example of the work of Richard Neutra in retaining an unusually high number of signature character-defining features associated with his residential architecture in the postwar years. Arcadia's 2016 Historic Context Statement evaluated the property as "individually eligible under Criterion C/3 as an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern architecture designed by master architect Richard Neutra."¹ Featured on cover of the *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine* on January 25, 1953, it was widely published in domestic and international publications in 1951 and 1952, including the *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui*, *Arts and Architecture*, *Vitrium*, *Nuestra Arquitectura*, and *Die Kunst*. The Brod House retains an exceptional degree of integrity and is the only house designed by Neutra in Arcadia.²

Narrative

Even more than many of his legendary peers in mid-century Modernism, Neutra is renowned for his ability to integrate indoors and outdoors. Designed for a young optometrist and his wife, here in the Brod House Neutra surpassed the design of many of his more well-known homes, seen in the remarkable porosity of the home to the outdoors while delivering a house filled with functional and thoughtful details. With its sliding glass walls and hinged glass door, the screened garden room provides a special liminal, transitional space, extinguishing the boundary between interior and exterior. Other renowned homes with similar screened rooms include the Miller Mensendieck House, Palm Springs, 1937, and the Bald House, Ojai, 1943. However, in both of these dwellings, the screened terrace is off the living room, on its own, and not integrated with unfolding life in the kitchen, the pool, and the living area as does the Brod House garden room. The flagstone flooring contributes to this effort, as does the remarkable "indoor" built-in multi-colored brick barbeque, conveniently located within easy reach of both the kitchen, the dining room, and the garden room.

The interior embodies the significance of the Brod House and the reasons why Neutra is considered one of the twentieth century's greatest architects. Examples abound. The design of the office/den demonstrates the architect's careful attention to both the needs of the professional optometrist and a family setting, just as he did in similar fashion at the Kramer House, Norco, 1953. There, he designed additional sleeping quarters next to the garage for a

¹ Architectural Resources Group (ARG), Arcadia Historic Context Statement, Jan. 11, 2016, 78.

² The magazines are in the Richard and Dion Neutra Papers, UCLA, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections.

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country doctor who sometimes needed to slip away for house calls in the middle of the night when the rest of the family was sleeping. At the Brod House, the office can be walled off, and by locating it at the front of the house the design allows the doctor to see who is approaching the house. The closet and tiny bathroom, located just off the front door, confers dignity on a visitor arriving for an appointment. An exterior door on the south provides the optometrist or a guest an additional exit, permitting even greater privacy for entering and exiting.

Designing many paths of travel throughout a house is a typical hallmark of Neutra's architecture. It affords an individual more personal choice as well as more freedom of movement. The spatial relationships on the interior, intended to be a logical, effortless, and natural progression of spaces, are aesthetically anchored in the wood that flows throughout and unifies the entire house; according to realtor notes from the 1950s and '60s, the plywood was veneered in South American mahogany.

The house also possesses other standard Neutra hallmarks, seen in the clever details and built-in cabinetry that permit an easy functionality among all the inhabitants.³ Neutra insisted that wherever possible, details did "double duty." That requirement is seen in the inset cutouts in drawer fronts. The cutouts accomplished three things. First, an uninterrupted visual plane was not only more aesthetically pleasing but reduced what Neutra considered visual chaos, which he believed contributed to human stress, no matter how apparently inconsequential. Second, the cutout reduced the need for fussy cleaning around handles. Third, it eliminated the cost of hardware. For cabinet doors, small chrome round knobs (another choice typical of Neutra) are present, along with unique shaped wooden handles used in the kitchen and the living room cabinets. Another "double-duty" detail is seen in the bedroom closets. Surmounting the sliding closet doors, translucent Factrolite panels are illuminated from lights in the closet, providing gentle light both into the closet and out into the room.⁴ Midway on the sliding closets walls, three inset brass finger pulls, characteristic of Neutra, maintain a monolithic plane while permitting the operation of the closet sliders. Elsewhere, "hidden" closets are built into the walls, most dramatically in the dining room, where one vertical panel open to reveal a closet, and another, on brass piano hinges, opens to reveal the shelves between the kitchen and the dining room, a gesture that eliminates gratuitous steps for the homemaker. The bathrooms, too, are exceptional in their integrity. Except for one minor alteration with a mirror and one sink, the Crane fixtures and original Hallmack [stet] accessories are intact, including the lavatories that are steel rimmed.

³ Realtor notes documenting the features of the house, owner, and transaction dates and values were obtained from the Arcadia Public Library.

⁴ In the bedroom adjacent to the primary suite, the Factrolite glass has been replaced, and will be restored with as an exact match as possible.

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Based on the experiences of Neutra's own family and because he witnessed the ravages of World War I and the Spanish influenza, cross-ventilation to carry away air-borne diseases and germs was a requisite. The clerestory windows (hopper windows, meaning windows hinged at the base that open into the interior) on the south side of the living room provide for such ventilation. Now a common attribute and today considered the most energy-efficient and comfortable, Neutra began specifying radiant heating with the Beard House, Altadena, 1934, and that character-defining feature is present at the Brod House. Built-in speakers for the radio and phonograph flank the built-in divan below the open shelving on the south side of the carpeted living room and adjacent to the north side of the fireplace, other features that speak to the Period of Significance. In the bedrooms, the remnants of a built-in intercom system remain for communicating with the maid, whose bedroom, tucked between the garage and the kitchen, was quite a distance from the primary suite.

Clearly, to achieve such a consummate design in such an upscale development, the Highlands, the young Brods must have enjoyed considerable resources. Nonetheless, Earle Brod took one further step to ensure success. In a letter to Neutra dated June 9, 1949, Brod noted enthusiastically that with the advice of general contractor Red Marsh, Brod acted as his own general contractor. "I have had no difficulty at all, no errors of any magnitude, and no particular headaches. I am very pleased with our progress and expect to have the house finished ahead of schedule," Brod wrote to his architect. The mention of Red Marsh adds to the dwelling's significance — the tall, taciturn Marsh is considered Neutra's finest builder and general contractors.⁵ Brod was right: there were a very few Neutra houses whose owners built them, and none as accomplished or as handsomely detailed as the Brod.

EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

Within the Neutra canon, the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House is one of Neutra's best houses in acquitting so many features with such fluidity. Additionally, the subject property retains all seven aspects of integrity, including location, workmanship, design, materials, feeling, and association. With regard to setting, the larger context of The Highlands is unchanged, and while there is some modification in Bennett Covert's work, the change is not only compatible and subtle but enhances the dwelling using plant materials that are in keeping with mid-century Modern landscaping. Therefore, the subject property is an excellent candidate for designation as a historic landmark, City of Arcadia.

⁵ Apart from his fame as a great builder, Marsh gained a different sort of notoriety in his own right. When Neutra went to visit Ayn Rand, the owner of Neutra's fabled 1935 Von Sternberg House, Marsh drove Neutra there. Approaching the house, Rand ran past the flustered Neutra to throw her arms around the startled Marsh. "You are the embodiment of Howard Roark," Rand cried. Marsh, who retired to grow champion orchids, told me the story himself.

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Significance, Setting

Postwar suburban landscapes were shaped by many factors. Suburbia replaced miles of agricultural and citrus farms. The war was over. Victory Gardens with their humble emphasis on raising your own food lost their appeal. Young veterans, including Pasadena-born Willard Bennett Covert, a graduate of Pasadena Junior (now City) College had served in Iwo Jima as a Marine before recovering in Hawaii.⁶ After their time in Japan and Hawaii, they returned to the States with new experiences with landscape, more tropical, less about flowers and more about textures, sculptural qualities, and shades of green and gray, in a different range of scale than those of pretty prewar plantings. Shelter magazines like *House Beautiful* and the *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine* advocated the new landscape aesthetic, especially when pictured against the simple shapes and post-and-beam frames of mid-century homes. Big, biomorphically shaped plants like *Fatsia japonica*, a favorite of Neutra's, are present at the Brod House. TV and air-conditioning brought people indoors, so the once-cooling front porch and engagement with the street disappeared in favor of backyard privacy, barbeques, and swimming pools. Just as houses and home equipment needed to be more functional to reflect the lack of servants, landscaping, too, needed to be lower maintenance. Finally, landscape architects were increasingly exposed to and sometimes trained as Modernists, working closely with like-minded architects to integrate indoors and outdoors, house and garden, aesthetically. Covert's plan embodies all those sensibilities and the original front lawn's hardscape and plantings at the entry have achieved significance in their own right.

Richard Neutra, Architect

Richard Joseph Neutra (1892 – 1970) is regarded as one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century. Born in Vienna, Austria, the Modernist architect graduated summa cum laude from the Vienna Technical Institute (now the Technical University, Vienna) and was affiliated with the radical architectural theorist Adolf Loos in Loos's informal "Bauschule" before serving with the Austro-Hungarian Empire forces in World War I. Like his early friend and later sometime colleague Rudolf M. Schindler, Neutra was deeply influenced by the European publication of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Wasmuth Portfolios*, published in 1910-11, a watershed manifesto. The publication, which both Neutra and Schindler encountered in about 1912, illuminated Wright's radical conception of the "breaking of the [conventional] box" through the use of diagonal vistas through ganged corner windows, a more open plan, and an emphasis on the extended and low horizontal line. For Wright, these strategies culminated in a complete break with European-derived historicism in favor of a liberated, democratic architecture, an American architecture that embodied the individual free from

⁶ "News of Men in Service," *Metropolitan Pasadena Star-News*, May 21, 1945, p. 22

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constraints. Neutra deeply appreciated the break with historicism; however, he was less interested in individual expression as an end than in the potential of Wright's work to create surroundings and environments better suited to human well-being and on a scale that embraced all classes of people. While still in Europe, following World War I when there was little work in an exhausted Europe, Neutra worked for the famous Swiss gardener and landscape theorist Gustav Ammann. He then worked as City Architect for the feudal city of Luckenwalde, where he designed housing and the City's legendary forest cemetery before employment with Expressionist Erich Mendelsohn, one of Germany's most successful interwar architects. Neutra worked there from 1921 to 1923, when he immigrated to America, fulfilling a dream that had taken root years before. After a short stint in New York, he was hired as a draftsman for the famous Chicago firm, Holabird and Roche, where he mastered steel skyscraper framing and later met another hero, architect Louis Sullivan. He then worked for Wright in his atelier, Taliesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin, beginning in the fall of 1924 before moving in early 1925 to Los Angeles, which became Neutra's permanent home.

In Los Angeles, Neutra's international renown was established by the Lovell Health House, which was one of the few West Coast designs included in the iconic 1932 "International Exhibition of Modern Architecture" held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Austrian-American went on to build hundreds of homes, including tract developments and military housing as well as private residences, primarily in Southern California but as far away as Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and Puerto Rico. The author of several books advocating his philosophy of "biorealism," harnessing science, medicine, psychology, and evolutionary biology, Neutra distinguished himself from his Modernist peers in his credo that human beings needed to be connected to nature. He also argued that architecture as a profession needed to embrace a range of sciences including biology, evolutionary biology, environmental psychology, Gestalt aesthetics, and anthropology in order to better understand the basis of human needs and how best to address them. Neutra called the synthesis of architecture and these sciences *biorealism*, which he addressed in many books, beginning with *Survival Through Design* (1954), and ending with *Nature Near: The Late Essays of Richard Neutra* (1989). Biorealism sought to re-integrate human and nature through strategies Neutra devised that responded to the human range of perception through the senses. Each project blended a consideration of the human being as generic, with the same basic psychological and physiological needs as other humans, and as individual, with a highly "custom" history of unique experiences, wants, and needs. His buildings are Modern stylistically, especially embodied in his well-controlled, horizontal arrangements of asymmetrical massings, use of standardized, prefabricated systems and products, and unornamented planes of glass, white stucco, and wood; yet, they also invariably reach out to nature. On behalf of biorealism, he deployed a range of strategies, including continuity of

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materials inside and out, graduated transitions between public and private space, calibrated axes for views to the landscape, full-height window walls and steel-casement windows, and spider legs. Neutra also wrote on the need to include nature and landscape as a critical part of any design, whether residential, public, or commercial, demonstrated in the little layperson's book, *Mystery and Realities of the Site* (1951). Winner of numerous honorary doctorates, prizes, and awards, he earned the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal posthumously in 1977.

W. Bennett Covert, Landscape Architect

Pasadena born, bred, and based Willard Bennett Covert, 1925 - 1978, was a founding member of the American Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA), which sought to recognize licensed professionals who were landscape contractors as well as landscape architects (by contrast to the American Society of Landscape Architects, ASLA, which banned combining disciplines as a potential conflict of interest.) Throughout the 1950s and '60s, Bennett Covert was regularly featured, almost weekly, in local newspapers, primarily the *Los Angeles Times* and San Gabriel Valley publications for his innovative landscapes, pools, and gardens. By 1955, he was designing landscapes in Arcadia, including the Robert Spreen Residence, 815 Hampton Road, for Courtland Paul Landscape Associates. Later that year, the *Los Angeles Times* featured a Bennett Covert garden that included "fatsia, acanthus, golden bamboo," and papyrus, along with a garden by Eckbo, Royston, and Williams, considered one of the greatest Modern landscape firms in the country.⁷ A week later, the *Times* featured one of Bennett Covert's special wood benches (also present at the Brod House), part of the setting "for a dramatic composition of richly textured tropical plants."⁸ He wrote articles too, ranging from drainage to ground covers (the *Pasadena Independent*, April 3, 1955) and was increasingly associated with well-known regional designers such as noted Modernist architect John Galbraith. In 1966, he was retained to design the "Golden West Village" in Arcadia, the 5.5-acre site for the Pantry Food Market where little expense was spared, according to an article in the *Pasadena Independent* in which he was pictured and quoted.⁹

⁷ Betty Rupert, "An Ancient Modern," *Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1955, p. 331

⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1955, p. 334.

⁹ *Pasadena Independent*, June 8, 1966, p. 22.

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CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Exterior Character Defining Features – Mid-Century Modernism

The Brod House shares many of the typical characteristics of Mid-Century Modern houses in Southern California. These include:

- . a long, horizontal profile reinforced with a flat roof
- . a deep integration with site, setting, and landscape through
 - extended overhangs
 - copious amounts of glass
 - materials that continue from inside to outside, bridging interior and exterior
- . post-and-beam construction, or the regular disposition of posts
- . diagonal views through mitred glass corners
- . windows usually sliding, casement, jalousie, or fixed lights, with simple frames often commercial in origin
- . doors usually single-panel wood or painted, with no ornamentation
- . use of simple, modern materials: concrete, stucco, float glass, steel, and aluminum, contrasted with natural materials such as brick and stone,
 - . a rhythmic distribution of details, wall treatments, textures, and windows
 - . lack of applied ornament

Exterior Character Defining Features – Neutra

The Brod House also exhibits a broad complement of features typical of Neutra's work:

- . flat roofs (technically, not flat but requisite slopes often hidden)
- . use of stucco walls contrasted with casement and fixed windows and sliding window walls, to effect an aesthetic of alternating solids and voids
- . rhythmic changes in heights, alternating stucco planes with fascia roof lines
- . often wood planking or wood board-and-batten walls
- . use of stain or paint – white alternating with dark brown or silver.
- . rounded post caps separated by window units, created by adding a separate piece of lumber, flat on one side and subtly rounded on the other, which fit over a squared 4" post, thus softening the visual effect of an otherwise rectilinear composition
- . built-in cabinetry with inset cut-in handholds, simple knobs, or brass inset finger pulls
- . custom-designed cushions for built-in sofas and divans
- . the use of Factrolite glass for windows and panels surmounting closets
- . spider legs (extended wood beams supported by wooden posts or columns)
- . continuity of materials indoors and out
- . use of standard, off-the-shelf components such as Hallmack and Crane fittings
- . banks of casement windows and full-height glass walls
- . exterior strip lighting at the edges of roof overhangs
- . flush panel doors
- . use of plywood veneers for interior finishes

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PERMIT RECORD, 1203 Oakwood Drive, Arcadia 91006-2411 APN 5771-017-008

Date Issued Jan. 11, 2018
Permit No. B00-058-752
Purpose Plumbing
Valuation None provided
Applicant Name Lawrence C. Papp and Carolyn S. Papp
Contractor Name Ati Installation

Date Issued Sept. 12, 2007
Permit No. B00-028-476
Purpose 3-ply new roof
Valuation None provided
Applicant Name Lawrence C. Papp and Carolyn S. Papp
Contractor Name Reynolds Roofing

Date Issued Feb. 8, 2006
Permit No. Affiliated with B00-024-141
Purpose Oak evaluation
Valuation None provided
Applicant Name Lawrence Papp
Contractor Name Tucker's Tree Works

Date Issued Jan. 30, 2006
Permit No. B00-024-141
Purpose One-half of 140 LF of 6-FT tall wall shared with 1211 Oakwood Dr.
Valuation \$3,150.00
Applicant Name Lawrence C. Papp and Carolyn S. Papp
Contractor Name "Owner-builder hiring lic. contractor"

Date Issued Jan. 5, 2000
Permit No. B00-004-740
Purpose Electrical
Valuation None provided
Applicant Name Lawrence C. Papp and Carolyn S. Papp
Contractor Name Integrity Electric

Date Issued Oct. 29, 1991
Permit No. A9104195
Purpose Water heater and vent
Applicant Name David A. Wenger
Contractor Name Johnsson's Plumbing

Date Issued July 26, 1991
Permit No. A9102680
Purpose New piping / water treatment equipment
Applicant Name Lawrence Papp

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Contractor Name None provided

Date Issued Sept. 26, 1985
Permit No. 1CL4074
Purpose Water Service
Applicant Name Mr. and Mrs. Papp
Contractor Name Philip Roach

Date Issued Aug. 12, 1960
Permit No. 26422
Purpose Swimming pool
Valuation \$3,300
Applicant Name Mr. and Mrs. J. Heiland
Contractor Name California Pools Inc.

Date Issued Jan. 27, 1948
Building Record Several tasks/permit numbers noted on one card, with all dates recording the inspections between Feb. 28, 1949, and Aug. 31, 1949.
16782 Power pole
12149 Formwork
18460 Rough Plumbing
Gas (no permit no.)
1260 Sewer
18713 Furnace and radiant heating
16961 Rough Electrical
1795 Curb
Framing (no permit no.)
Lath (no permit no.)
16961 Electrical Wiring
Plumbing Fixtures (no permit no.)
7611 Electrical
Purpose Dwelling and Garage
Owner Name Earle L. Brod
Contractor, Building "Same"
Contractor, Heating S & W Radiant Heat
Contractor, Septic Cesspool Radich Co.
Contractor, Wiring Garlin Electrical Company

Ownership History

Commissioning client Earle Lawrence Brod was born Nov. 16, 1919, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania listed in US Census 1950 as born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in Nov. 16, 1919. He was a graduate of Cornell University and the Los Angeles College of Optometry. In 1948, the Voter Registration entry shows him living at 728 S. Washington Ave. Los Angeles; two years earlier he lived at 4226 ½ Los Feliz Blvd. His World War II Draft Card, dated Dec. 12, 1941, shows his occupation as optometrist at 22 years old with a mailing address of 620 W. 149th St., New York, the home of Mrs. Bessie Brod. (The place of residence is first listed as 909 W. Jefferson Blvd., Los Angeles, and crossed out with 32 W. Bridle St. Baltimore MD.) The 1950 US Census lists him with the same profession and living at 1203 Oakwood Drive, the subject property. Brod apparently had a home office, according to the City Directory, 1950. Matilda Gellman Brod was born in Newark, New Jersey, on June 14, 1922. They married on May 16, 1945, in Manhattan. A Mrs. Mady Broad appears on the California Registration Roll 076 as being registered to vote in 1950.

Earle L. Brod died Feb. 14, 1952, age 33, and was buried at the Home of Peace Memorial Park and Mortuary, a cemetery that serves the Jewish community. According to the *Daily News-Post and Monrovia News-Post*, he “plunged to his death from the fifth floor of Cedars of Lebanon Hospital today. Detective William McRoberts said Dr. Brod had been despondent and under a psychiatrist’s care.”

In 1952, an undated realtor note obtained from the Arcadia Public Library notes, “husband just died.” Mady sold the house on Sept. 12, 1952, to Marjorie E. Cox, just nine months after her husband died. Mady Brod died eight months later on April 12, 1953 at the age of 31. The *Evening Vanguard* reported that on early Sunday morning, the day before, she struck a car in Westwood.; the *Independent* reported that she apparently ran a stop sign. Her address was stated as 14089 Eastborne Ave., Westwood and that she left two small children. She is buried alongside her husband. No further information about them was obtained.

Marjorie E Cox (James F. Cox is also listed as a possible owner) owned it until Ms. Cox sold it to John G. and Grace R. Heiland on July 14, 1960. Chicago-born John George. Heiland, married to Grace Ruby Kruger, is listed at 1203 Oakwood Drive as Associate Director, Bell & Howell Research Center, according to City Directory, 1960 records. John Heiland was born Sept. 10, 1917, and died Jan. 22, 2010, at the age of 92. Grace Heiland was born on January 22, 1917, and died Nov. 4, 2004.

Lawrence C. and Carolyn S. Papp purchased the subject property on July 31, 1963, and added the property to the Papp Family Trust on May 14, 2020.

Chris and Nedda Karlen purchased 1203 Oakwood Drive on Dec. 12, 2023, and put the property in a family trust.

SOURCES and REFERENCES

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Attachment No. 4

Preliminary Exemption Assessment



CITY OF
ARCADIA

PRELIMINARY EXEMPTION ASSESSMENT

1. Name or description of project:	Historical Landmark No. HL 24-01 with a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Section 15308 to designate the Earle L. and Mady G. Brod House as a historical landmark at the local level.	
2. Project Location – Identify street address and cross streets or attach a map showing project site (preferably a USGS 15' or 7 1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name):	1203 Oakwood Drive – The house is located on the northwest corner of Oakwood Drive and E. Sycamore Avenue.	
3. Entity or person undertaking project:	A.	
	B. Other (Private)	
	(1) Name	The Ismaili Karlen Family Trust, Property Owner
	(2) Address	1203 Oakwood Drive Arcadia, CA 91006
4. Staff Determination:		
<p>The Lead Agency's Staff, having undertaken and completed a preliminary review of this project in accordance with the Lead Agency's "Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)" has concluded that this project does not require further environmental assessment because:</p>		
a. <input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed action does not constitute a project under CEQA.	
b. <input type="checkbox"/>	The project is a Ministerial Project.	
c. <input type="checkbox"/>	The project is an Emergency Project.	
d. <input type="checkbox"/>	The project constitutes a feasibility or planning study.	
e. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The project is categorically exempt.	
	Applicable Exemption Class:	15308 – Class 8 (Actions by regulatory agencies for the protection of the environment)
f. <input type="checkbox"/>	The project is statutorily exempt.	
	Applicable Exemption:	
g. <input type="checkbox"/>	The project is otherwise exempt on the following basis:	
h. <input type="checkbox"/>	The project involves another public agency which constitutes the Lead Agency.	
	Name of Lead Agency:	

Date: September 19, 2024

Staff: Edwin Arreola, Senior Planner