

P A S T
CONSULTANTS LLC

Seth A. Bergstein
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June 20, 2021

Jim Larson
Email: jimglarson@gmail.com

Re: Historic Assessment for 118 Ortolon Circle, Santa Cruz, CA
APN. 001-16-122

Dear Mr. Larson:

This letter presents the results of our intensive historic assessment of the property located at 118 Ortolon Circle, in Santa Cruz, CA. The attached DPR523 forms provide the formal assessment of the subject property and conclusions of historic significance.

The subject property contains the Norman Lezin House, constructed circa-1954 in the California Ranch/Second Bay Region styles. Our intensive survey concludes that the house on the subject property qualifies as an individual historic resource under California-register Criterion 1 for its association with prominent Santa Cruz businessman and public servant, Norman S. Lezin; and Criterion 3, under the category of architecture as an intact and representative example of the work of noteworthy architect Joseph Esherick. The house retains nearly all of its intact character-defining features and maintains all seven aspects of historic integrity.

Please see the attached DPR523 forms for detailed property description, list of character defining features and evaluation of historic significance.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this evaluation.

Sincerely,



Seth A. Bergstein, Principal

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 12

*Resource Name or #: (assigned by recorder) 118 Ortalon Circle

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County: Santa Cruz

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: N/A

Date: N/A T ; R ; ¼ of ¼ of Sec ; M.D. B.M.

c. Address: 118 Ortalon Circle

City: Santa Cruz

Zip: 95060

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation: A.P.N. 001-161-22

*P3a. **Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

Located on a 4.9-acre property surrounded by woodlands, the Lezin House is a wood-framed residence designed by Joseph Esherick in a hybrid California Ranch/Second Bay Region style. El-shaped in plan, the house resembles a Japanese pavilion, with an attached garage on the south elevation, connected to the living quarters by an *engawa* (veranda) with a wood-slatted Japanese screen serving as the connecting element. The garage's south elevation contains a floor-to-ceiling window that also harkens to Japanese design. The primary entrance is through a simple wood door to the east of the *engawa*. The house has gable roofs with exposed beams and wide fasciae. The east elevation features a wall of glass in the living-room gable end and a northeast corner window. The north elevation features a wide brick chimney and bank of wood-framed windows facing the wooded view. Fenestration consists of wood-framed, fixed and casement windows. Wood shingles and replaced wood shakes finish the walls and roof, respectively. See continuation sheet, page 3 for photographs (**Figures 1 – 6**).

*P3b. **Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP2

*P4. **Resources Present:** Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Front (south and west) elevations, 2021

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



*P6. **Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**

Historic
 Prehistoric Both
1954: Assessor Records

*P7. **Owner and Address:**

Jim Larson
118 Ortalon Circle
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

*P8. **Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)

PAST Consultants, LLC
P.O. Box 721
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

*P9. **Date Recorded:** 6/16/21

*P10. **Survey Type:** (Describe)

Owner Requested

*P11. **Report Citation:** None

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 12

*NRHP Status Code 5S1

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 118 Ortolon Circle

- B1. Historic Name: Norman Lezin House
- B2. Common Name:
- B3. Original Use: Residential
- B4. Present Use: Residential

*B5. **Architectural Style:** California Ranch/Second Bay Region

*B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

The building was completed in 1954. It remains in largely unaltered condition, with no substantial additions or alterations.

*B7. **Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** **Original Location:** Same

*B8. **Related Features:** N/A

B9a. Architect: Joseph Esherick

b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. **Significance: Theme:** Residential Architecture

Area: Santa Cruz

Period of Significance: 1954

Property Type: House

Applicable Criteria: Local

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

See continuation sheet, pages 4 - 11.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*B12. **References:**

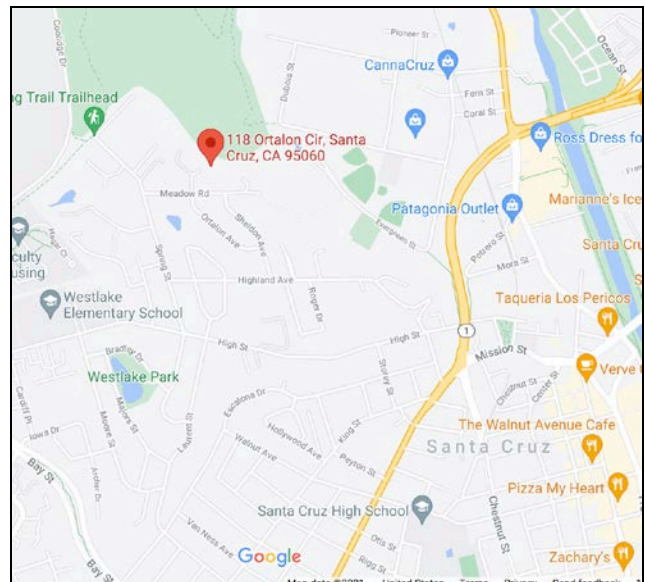
See continuation sheet, page 12.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. **Evaluator:** PAST Consultants, LLC

***Date of Evaluation:** 6/16/21

(This space reserved for official comments.)



*Recorded by: PAST Consultants, LLC

*Date: 6/16/21

■ Continuation

□ Update

P3a. Description: Photographs



Figure 1. Garage and Japanese veranda, south elevation.



Figure 2. Looking east through veranda toward entrance.



Figure 3. Rear (east) elevation, taken from southeast corner.



Figure 4. Rear (north) elevation at living room.



Figure 5. Rear (north) elevation, showing Japanese screen that connects the main house to the garage.



Figure 6. West elevation at garage, showing glazing resembling a Japanese *Shoji* screen.

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□ Update

B10. Significance: Significance Statement

Postwar Development in the Project Area

The introduction to Volume One of the *Santa Cruz Historic Building Survey* notes the changing nature of economics in Santa Cruz following World War II. Returning servicemen and women and the subsequent baby boom would increase the city's population significantly: the city had 14,395 residents in 1930. By 1960, the city population nearly doubled to 25,596 citizens. With the nature of tourism changing and the substantial demand for new housing for the returning servicemen and servicewomen, the major economic forces driving the built character of the city was the growth of government, the construction of new freeways and the resulting urban redevelopment, and the development of the University of California, which opened in 1965.

Residential development in the project vicinity developed slowly after World War II, with much of the construction utilizing the principles of postwar suburbanization: the laying out of subdivisions with more generous lot sizes, the emphasis on the automobile for access to the homes, and the popularization of the California Ranch style, whose sprawling horizontal lines – many with attached garages – were suitable to the suburban development. The Meadow Park, Track #143 subdivision, in which the subject property resides, was developed in 1954. The homes within the track resemble the common variants of the California Ranch style, with sprawling horizontal lines, gable roofs, attached garages, stucco or wood siding and relatively little or no ornamentation (**Figure 7**).

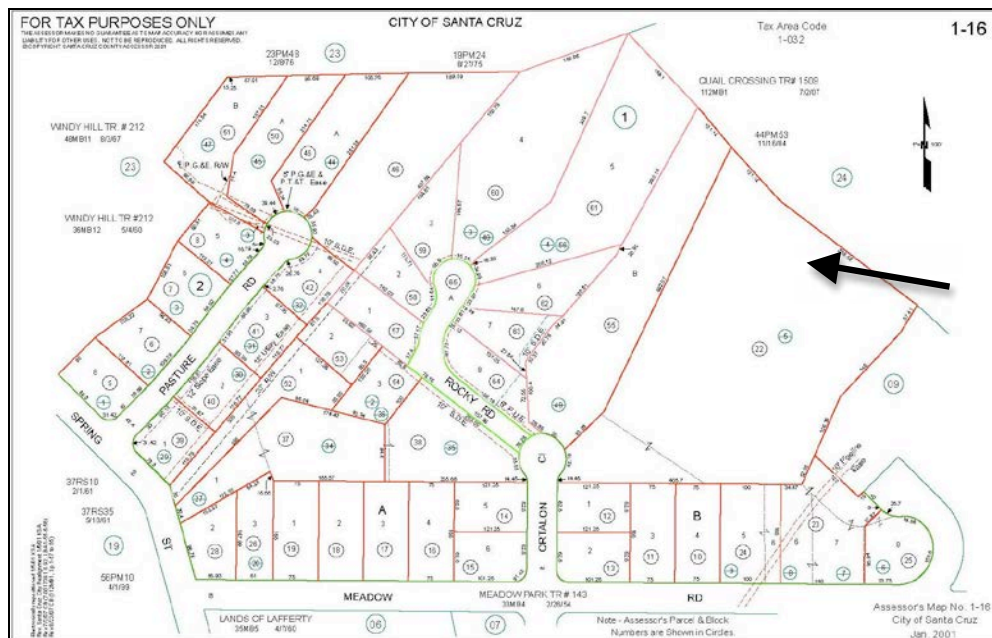


Figure 7. Parcel map showing the subject property with an arrow.

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■ Continuation

□ Update

B10. Significance: Significance Statement (continued)

Development of the Subject Property

Norman S. and Margaret Salz Lezin moved to Santa Cruz in 1948, with Norman taking a position in the A.K. Salz Tannery, owned and operated by his wife's father, Ansley K. Salz, who became sole owner of the business in 1929. The couple resided at 410 13th Street, in Santa Cruz at this time, but in 1953 they hired notable architect Joseph Esherick to design a home on a newly-purchased 4.9-acre site north of downtown Santa Cruz, nestled in the wooded foothills of the Meadow Subdivision. The drawings were completed by 1954, shown below (**Figures 8 and 9**).

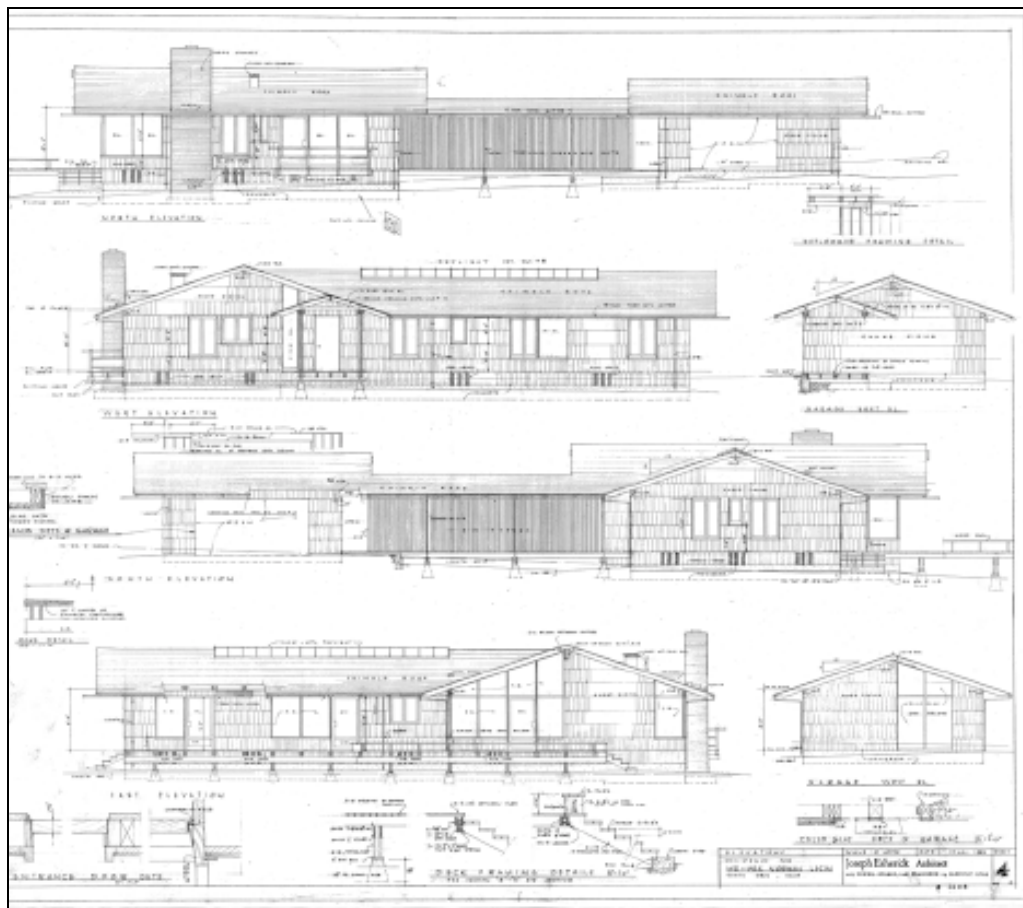


Figure 8. Scan of original elevation drawings by Joseph Esherick (*Courtesy: Jim Larson, owner*).

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■ Continuation

□ Update

B10. Significance: Significance Statement (continued)

Development of the Subject Property

The drawings were completed by 1954 building plan appears below (**Figure 9**).

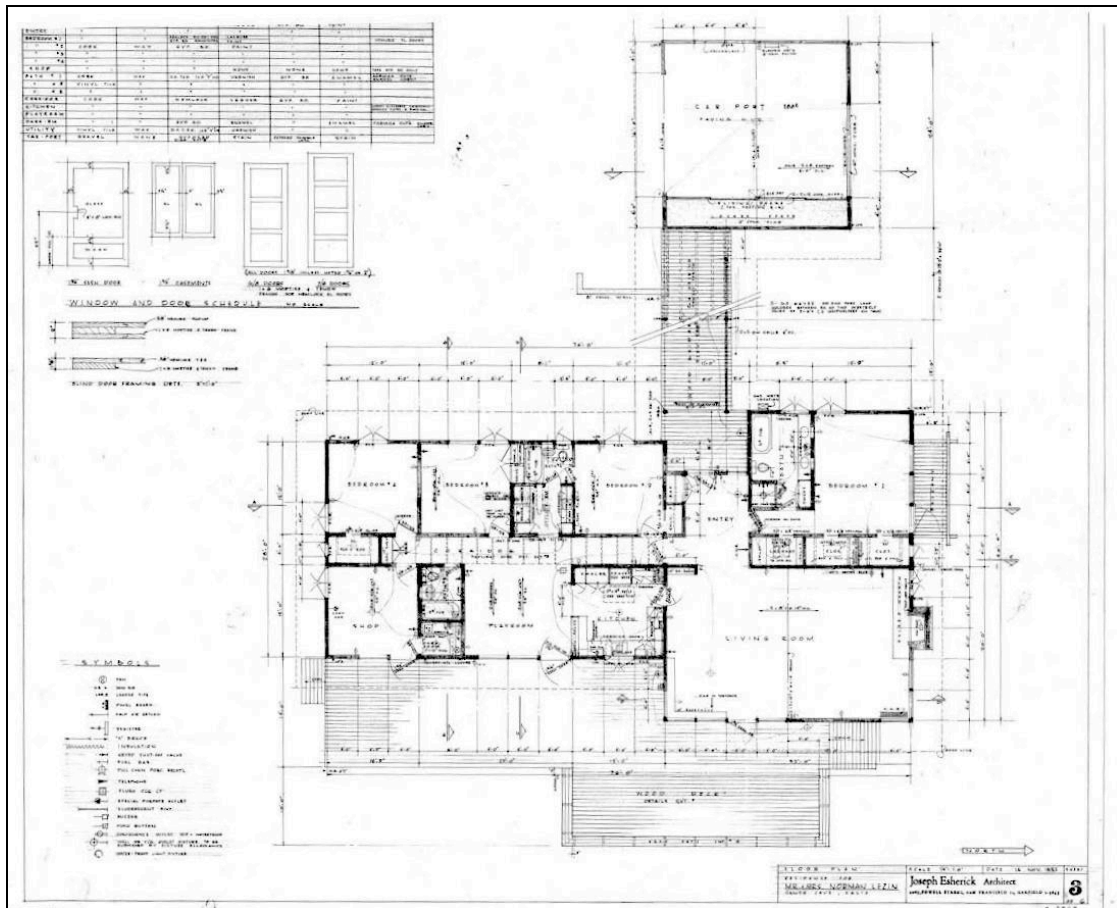


Figure 9. Scan of original plan drawings by Joseph Esherick (*Courtesy: Jim Larson, owner*).

Comparison of the drawings with the existing building reveals that the project was completed largely as designed, with the exception of a row of skylights that appear above the southern bedroom wing. Two small rectangular skylights were installed in the roof, rather than the bank of roof-peak skylights that appear on the drawings.

Aside from a partial reroofing of select building sections, the house is in essentially unaltered condition, with no major additions or alterations to the original design.

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Continuation

Update

B10. Significance: Significance Statement (continued)

Norman S. and Margaret Salz Lezin

Born to Ben and Estell Lezin of Cleveland, Ohio, Norman Sigmund Lezin (1924-2018), Norman S. Lezin attended Queen Ann High School in Seattle, and entered Reed College in Portland, Oregon before being called to World War II service in 1943. He entered into the army, serving a military intelligence post under General Douglas MacArthur, until the close of the war.

Following the war, Norman S. Lezin returned to Reed College, where he earned a degree in political science. He also met his lifelong partner, Margaret Salz, the daughter of A.K. Salz, president and owner of the A.K. Salz Tannery, one of the most successful tannery businesses in the United States. Norman quickly took a liking to the business, enjoyed the creative process of making craft leathers, and rose to president of the company by the early 1950s. It was this time of prosperity that the Lezins purchased the subject property and hired Joseph Esherick to design their family home. The family resided in the home until the passing of Norman S. Lezin in 2018.

While employed at the Salz Tannery, Norman S. Lezin expanded the artisanal business into one of the largest tannery operations in the United States. With the company's success and the increasing demand for the natural beauty and longevity of artisanal leather, the company grew to over 400 employees by 1969, with work ongoing around the clock. He also took an environmental- and labor-friendly approach to his leadership, offering bicycles to his employees through company-financed loans. His approach drew *Life Magazine* to cover the company's strong environmental stance in 1971. When the company closed its doors in 2001 it was the last operating leather tannery west of the Mississippi River.

Norman S. Lezin was active in local politics and civic institutions. He won a seat on the Santa Cruz City Council in 1962 and was elected mayor two years later. Norman served as President of the Santa Cruz Citizen's Health Council, was appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. to the California Industrial Welfare Commission, was a democratic superdelegate in the 1956 National Convention, and was chairman of the Santa Cruz Planning Advisory Committee. In 1989, Norman and Margaret Salz were named Man and Woman of the Year by the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce. Norman Lezin was also instrumental in recommending the former Cowell Ranch as the site for the University of California, Santa Cruz. He aided in fundraising for the new campus location and was given an honorary fellowship at UCSC's Adlai E. Stevenson College for his efforts promoting the university throughout his lifetime.

The business, civic and community success of Norman S. and Margaret S. Lezin all were achieved while the couple occupied the subject property.

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Continuation

Update

B10. Significance: Significance Statement (continued)

Joseph Esherick (1914 - 1998): Architect

Born in Philadelphia in 1914, Joseph Esherick graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1937. The Beaux-Arts traditional architectural approach was not to Esherick's liking, as his uncle, Wharton Esherick, a well-known woodworker and sculptor gave the young Joseph a love of wood and of handcraftsmanship. Esherick left the East in 1938 and moved to San Francisco, taking positions in the office of famed structural engineer Walter Steilberg, who was also head draftsman for Julia Morgan's projects. Steilberg introduced Esherick to the First Bay Region of Craftsman architects, including Morgan and Bernard Maybeck. Esherick also visited William Wurster, while he occupied a small apartment in Willis Polk's woodsy Russian Hill house.

Esherick was fascinated by structural form and he subsequently took a position with the influential architect, Gardner Dailey, helping design early Modernist buildings such as the Owens House (1939) and the Coyote Point Training School (1943), the latter emphasizing modular building construction using wood. This period also saw the young Esherick travelling the California countryside, becoming enamored by vernacular barn and agricultural forms – firmly rooting him in the woodsy, Bay Region style. After brief service in the United States Navy in World War II, Esherick returned to San Francisco and opened his own practice in 1945. The firm was successful and grew steadily. By 1953, Esherick became President of Joseph Esherick Associates. The firm would retain this name until 1972 when Esherick joined forces with noteworthy mid-century architects, forming the firm of Esherick, Homsey, Dodge and Davis (EHDD), which produced numerous important buildings in the region into the 1990s. Examples include The Cannery in San Francisco (1987), Sea Ranch (1966) and the Monterey Bay Aquarium (1984). Examples of the firm's educational buildings include the Adlai Stevenson College at UCSC (1966), and Wurster Hall, the architectural school at the University of California, Berkeley. The architect won an AIA Gold Medal in 1989 and was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of architects (AIA).

Joseph Esherick taught at the University of California, Berkeley from 1952 – 1985, serving as the Dean of the School of Architecture from 1977 – 1981.

The subject house is an example of Joseph Esherick's early, Second Bay Region residential designs. The approach is practical and functional, extending the First Bay Region design influences of Maybeck, Morgan and others in a composition that emphasizes the expression of structural form and the extensive use of wood, both as a structural and a decorative material. The Lezin House also displays Modernist design elements coming to the architectural forefront in the 1950s, including the sensitive placement of the house within the landscape and the promotion of what has been described by architectural historian David Gebhard as "the Long View," which allowed the landscape to be observed from multiple rooms within the house. The Lezin House also celebrates Esherick's fascination with Japanese design, both for its use of wood for architectural expression and for the layout of the individual living quarters as a pavilion, with a detached garage linked by an open veranda, or *engawa*, with a thin Japanese screen forming a wall that connects the garage to the main house. Additional Japanese design elements include the use of a glazed wall on the garage's south elevation, which resembles a Japanese *shoji* screen. The house takes the mundane expression of the Ranch form seen in the surrounding streets, adding elements of the Japanese and Second Bay Region traditions to create an outstanding example of the California Ranch style.

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Continuation

Update

B10. Significance: Evaluation of Historic Significance

California Register of Historical Resources

1. CR-1: Association with significant events, patterns or trends.

The subject property is not historic under this Criterion as no significant event led to the subject property's development. Although constructed during the postwar building boom in the Santa Cruz area, the property was developed by a successful family seeking to build their home in the town of their employment. Norman and Margaret Lezin purchased the property independent of the population expansion and subsequent rise in housing construction in the Santa Cruz area and not as a result of a significant event or pattern of events.

2. CR-2: Association with significant persons.

The subject property is historically significant under California Register Criterion 2 for its association with Norman S. and Margaret S. Lezin. Norman S. Lezin owned and operated one of the most successful tannery businesses in the United States. While the tannery buildings exist as a rehabilitated project in Santa Cruz today, the subject property is also eligible, as Norman S. Lezin achieved his significant contributions while residing at the subject property. In addition, Norman S. Lezin was active both politically and philanthropically in the Santa Cruz area, as city councilmember, mayor and civic leader in other institutions. All of these accomplishments occurred while he resided in the subject property. The subject property is significant under California Register Criterion 2.

3. CR-3: Association with significant architecture and/or design

The subject property is historically significant under California Register Criterion 3, in the area of architecture, for its intact Second Bay Region/California Ranch-style house by master architect Joseph Esherick. The subject house was constructed early in Esherick's career and represents the architect's use of Japanese architecture and space planning, combined with Esherick's modular construction methodology expressed in wood. The subject house possesses a substantial amount of historic integrity.

Conclusions

The subject property is eligible for the California Register under Criteria 2 and 3.

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*Date: 6/16/21

Continuation

Update

B10. Significance: Evaluation of Historic Significance

City of Santa Cruz Historic Preservation Criteria

1. Recognized as a significant example of the cultural, natural, archaeological, or built heritage of the City, State or Nation; and/or

The subject property contains an intact example of master architect Joseph Esherick's early Second Bay Region/California Ranch-style designs and is a significant example of the built heritage of Santa Cruz and California.

2. Associated with a significant local, State or National event; and/or

The subject property is not associated with a significant event.

3. Associated with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the City, State, or nation; and/or

The subject property is associated with the work of Norman S. and Margaret S. Lezin for both their occupational and civic contributions to the Santa Cruz region.

4. Associated with an architect, designer, or builder whose work has influenced the development of the City, State or Nation; and/or

The subject property is associated with the work of master architect Joseph Esherick whose work has influenced the development of the Santa Cruz region and the state of California.

5. Recognized as possessing special aesthetic merit or value as a building with quality of architecture and that retains sufficient features showing its architectural significance; and/or

The house on the subject property is an intact example of a Joseph Esherick-designed house, displaying Second Bay Region/California Ranch-stylistic details in excellent condition, giving it aesthetic merit.

6. Recognized as possessing distinctive stylistic characteristics or workmanship significant for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of native materials; and/or;

The subject house does possess distinctive stylistic characteristics.

7. Retains sufficient integrity to accurately convey its significance.

The subject house retains all seven aspects of historic integrity.

Conclusions

The subject property is eligible according to Santa Cruz Historic Preservation Criteria 1,3,4,5,6, and 7.

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Continuation

Update

B10. Significance:

Historic Integrity

1. **Location.** The house is in its original location and maintains integrity of location.
2. **Design.** The house is nearly unaltered, possesses its original character defining features and has integrity of design.
3. **Setting.** The house remains in its residential setting and maintains integrity of setting.
4. **Workmanship.** The house displays integrity of workmanship in its Japanese and Second Bay Region stylistic elements and handcrafted architectural elements rendered in wood.
5. **Materials.** The house displays integrity of materials in its wood-clad construction, wood details, Japanese-design stylistic elements and original wood windows.
6. **Feeling.** The house retains its feeling as an early example of Joseph Esherick's residential designs.
7. **Association.** The house maintains historic association as an example of Joseph Esherick's early house designs because it maintains all of its original character defining features.

Conclusions

The subject property maintains all seven aspects of historic integrity.

*Recorded by: PAST Consultants, LLC

*Date: 6/16/21

Continuation

Update

B12. References:

- American Institute of Architects, *AIA Historical Directory of American Architects*.
- Blumenthal, Ralph, "Joseph Esherick, 83 an Acclaimed Architect (obituary)," *New York Times*, 12/25/98.
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- City of Santa Cruz, Building and Planning Department files, Santa Cruz, California.
- Joseph Esherick Collection: 1933-1985, Online Archive of California.
- Lehman, Susan, *Fully Developed Context Statement for the City of Santa Cruz*, 2000.
- "Norman S. Lezin: 1924 – 2018 (obituary)," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 1/14/2018.
- Charles Hall Page & Associates, Inc., *Santa Cruz Historic Building Survey – Volume 1*, 1976.
- *Polk's Santa Cruz City Directories*, 1950 – 1980.
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- Treib, Marc, *Appropriate – The Houses of Joseph Esherick, Berkeley Design Book #4*. William Stout Publishers, San Francisco, 2008.
- Woodbridge, Sally and David Gebhard, *Bay Area Houses*. Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City, 1998.